



**ETHNICITY AND  
SOCCER  
IN  
AUSTRALIA**

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**ASSH STUDIES IN SPORTS HISTORY NO. 10**

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## **EDITORS NOTE**

The ASSH Studies in Sports History series is designed to provide ASSH members and other readers with collections of articles on particular themes. The volumes should serve as handy reference works on those topics. This volume brings together the work of some of Australia's most prominent sports scholars on the topic of ethnicity and its role in Australian soccer. Together they provide an historical context to the modern phenomenon and examine the contemporary problems from a range of perspectives.

Each article in this volume was written originally for another purpose, namely for presentation at an international conference. Here they are brought together to provide readers with a more accessible single volume..

Professor Wray Vamplew, after serving as Pro-Vice Chancellor at the Flinders University of South Australia has recently returned to England to a chair in Sports History at De Monfort University, Leicester. Associate Professor Roy Jones teaches Geography and Dr Philip Moore teaches Anthropology in the School of Social Sciences, Curtin University of Technology. Dr Philip Mosely, who completed his doctoral dissertation on the History of Soccer in Australia, is currently based at the University of Canberra where he is completing a number of sports related research projects. Dr Roy Hay teaches History in the School of Australian and International Studies at Deakin University.

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Editor

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# **VIOLENCE IN AUSTRALIAN SOCCER: THE ETHNIC CONTRIBUTION\***

**Wray Vamplew**

There is a perceived violence problem in Australian soccer. To some extent this is a product of the media, particularly the Australian press, which has focussed on crowd disturbances seeing them as newsworthy in the light of the European experience. Nevertheless, a recent survey of persons actually involved in soccer suggested that it was the most violent of any football code in Australia and that crowd behaviour at soccer matches was rated as the worst of any sport.<sup>1</sup> This paper aims to provide background for on-going academic assessments of the situation by bringing together three major and interrelated themes of Australian history - migration, sport and violence.<sup>2</sup>

Immigration has been the major factor influencing Australia's population growth since the invasion of 1788 from a land containing perhaps half-a-million aborigines to the seventeen million or so inhabitants of today.<sup>3</sup> Australia was actually founded as a British penal settlement and between the arrival of the First Fleet in New South Wales to the cessation of transportation in 1868 some 140,000 British convicts found themselves involuntary migrants to the antipodes. Accompanying these early transportees were British administrative and military personnel, themselves often conscripted, though frequently temporary, migrants. From the 1830s, however, immigration increasingly was of free settlers, again predominantly British in origin. Of the total (non-aboriginal) populace of 1,152,000 in 1861, 723,000 were foreign born and 630,000 of these came from the British Isles. Migrants from Britain have continued to dominate the inflow of population: in 1981, 1,170,000 of the 3,102,000 foreign born

residents in Australia were British. However, other nations had despatched significant numbers including 283,000 from Italy, 153,000 from what was Yugoslavia, and 150,000 from Greece, many of whose relatives first came in the massive post World War Two migration, designed to supply Australia's desperate need for labour. In very recent years Asian migrants have increased significantly, partly because of the abandonment in the 1970s of the White Australia policy, but also due to the volume of refugees and the ensuing family reunions.

Many migrants retained an emotional attachment to their native land and sport, brought along as accompanying cultural baggage, provided a link with home in an alien environment. In seeking to participate in their traditional sports the British were no different from later migrants such as the Germans, who came to Australia following the European political and religious troubles of the late 1840s, and brought with them skittles, crossbows, target rifle-shooting, and gymnastics. However, the British were more numerous and hence it was their activities which dominated the Australian sporting calendar.

Inevitably soccer was one of the sports transported from Britain to Australia.<sup>4</sup> Reputedly the first game was held in August 1880 on Parramatta Common between the local Ring's School and the Wanderers. The recognisably British nomenclature of the latter team was also reflected in the organising bodies throughout the Australian colonies with the Southern British Football Association in New South Wales, the Anglo-Australian Football Association in Victoria and the British Football Associations appropriately prefixed by the colonial title in Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania. Each new wave of migration before the second World War, dominated as they were by Britons, brought a new influx of soccer enthusiasts. Nevertheless, despite being played in each state, the game never became the major football code in any of them, always ranking behind Australian rules in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia and rugby league in New South Wales and Queensland<sup>5</sup>

Whether caused by a favourable climate, boundless land, the high proportion of males in its early population or some other factor, there is no

doubt that sport flourished in Australia. Indeed it is often alleged that Australians have been besotted by sport: possessed by an obsession which lasts from the cradle to the grave, from the wearing of nappies in their team's colours to the scattering of their ashes at a favourite sporting venue. Although there is an element of hyperbole in the claims advanced for Australia's sporting involvement, it remains true that playing and watching sport is a central feature in the lives of many Australians.<sup>6</sup>

Since sport was part and parcel of the Australian way-of-life, it was an obvious avenue by which migrants could become aculturated.<sup>7</sup> Yet sporting migrants from Europe who came to these shores after 1945 opted for a game with which they were familiar rather than an overtly Australian one. Rugby, whether league or union, and Australian rules were unknown to the vast majority: to them football meant soccer. Unlike the workplace, the soccer field offered them an opportunity to demonstrate their skills without fluency in English. It gave them a sense of community, a link with their homeland, and a base for the socialisation of their Australian-born offspring. Soccer clubs emerged out of the ethnic social clubs which developed from the geographical concentration of particular groups of migrants. Throughout Australia teams were founded with ethnic names and such clubs began to dominate the game, particularly after 1957 when the leading ones broke away from existing organisations to setup their own, culminating in the formal establishment of the Australian Soccer Federation in 1961 which took over administrative control of the sport in Australia.<sup>8</sup> So much did soccer become identified with ethnic groups that, despite a long and continuing British involvement, it became disparagingly referred to as **wogball**, a term now enshrined as an Australian colloquism in the *Macquarie Dictionary*.<sup>9</sup> In recent years the image of soccer as a foreign game has been reinforced by the electronic media: Australian matches are featured virtually exclusively on the Special Broadcasting Service which caters for ethnic groups in Australia.

Australian sport has a violent history. Field sports, perhaps more than any other sporting activity including boxing, were unchallenged in their level of premeditated violence. Game laws in Australia were less

restrictive than in Britain and many of the early settlers took advantage of them to combine pleasure with food provision. Others, particularly the upper echelons, who donned hunting garb to chase wild dogs, emus and kangaroos or who chose to shoot rather than ride, rationalised their killing as pest control, albeit an entertaining form. Other brutal - to the modern mind - animal sports included cock fighting, coursing (with live hares) and trap pigeon shooting, all part of the British migrant's sporting luggage. Humans too faced sporting violence. The prize-ring epitomised what was tolerated in the name of sport. Rounds ended only when one pugilist was knocked or thrown to the ground; he was then given thirty seconds to toe a line scratched across the centre of the ring not till one combatant failed 'to come up to scratch' was the match over. With knuckles protected only by long soaking in brine, damage to a fighter's hands were common; far worse, however, were the horrific injuries inflicted on an opponent, particularly as early match agreements often allowed kicking, gouging, throttling and biting. This was part of an age in which the education system socialized boys into men. In these schools of hard knocks pupils were taught that courage was to be admired, pain to be endured and brutality, in the guise of manliness, to be tolerated.

Such attitudes and beliefs were a product of a violent society. Modern Australia was founded by invasion and, like many frontier societies, dealt violently with the indigenous population. Aborigines were massacred and poisoned as the settlers sought to take over their land: even more fell victim to European disease and alcohol.<sup>10</sup> Life for the invaders was also harsh. Transportation, in existence till 1868, was no pleasure trip and convict servitude, with its ever-present threat of flogging, no holiday.<sup>11</sup> Even free settlers found life difficult as they struggled first to survive and then to establish themselves in this vast and often unforgiving continent. Blood sweat and tears made Australia and in the process brutalised many of the inhabitants. Given that sport, as part of Australia's culture, would be subject to the same influences as other aspects of life, it is not surprising that historically Australian sport was often violent.

Many, including the author, would claim that times have changed, However, although it is easy to establish that Australia's past was a violent one, it is more difficult to show that the nation has become less violent. Nevertheless, lower crime rates, legal recognition of Aborigines as full Australians, hardening attitudes towards domestic violence and child abuse, and a growing tolerance towards homosexuals and ethnic minorities all indicate that Australian society has become more civilised.<sup>12</sup>

As attitudes towards societal violence have changed so too have they towards violence in sport Boxing remains as legitimised violence in which the ultimate aim is to render one's opponent unconscious. Nevertheless it has become more civilised in that bareknuckles gave way to leather mitts and later padded gloves; new rules outlawed certain blows, limited the number of rounds to be fought; and, to protect the smaller fighters, introduced weight divisions. Boxing would certainly not now be recommended for school children as a form of character building. Indeed AUSSIE SPORTS and games with modified rules in which height, weight, and even gender are of no advantage, are emphasising skill development and the fun of sport rather than the competition. Animal sports too have changed under the weight of public opinion. Legislation has outlawed the worst of the abuses and although some illegal sports activities still exist clandestinely, generally greyhounds now chase mechanical hares and clay pigeons have replaced live birds as shotgun targets. Even the slaughter of birds and animals in the wild has become increasingly restricted and subject to license.

Accentuating the change in society's attitude towards sporting violence has been the role of the electronic media Previously spectators had to go to the ground to witness the mayhem, but now modern technology, often glorifying violence in order to sell its product, has brought the thuggery into the home with instant replay and sports news grabs reinforcing the perception of increased violence.<sup>13</sup> In doing so it has sparked a backlash by provoking a growing number of people - often with no direct interest in sport - to become concerned at the level of violence being portrayed. For the first time many Australians have become aware

of - and viewed with distaste - the violence stalking the nation's playing fields.

Given that attitudes towards violence in sport have changed should anything be read into the fact that 60% of the survey respondents from soccer felt that player violence in their sport was excessive? There is in fact no hard evidence that on-field violence is any worse than it used to be. The traditional British style, which provided the basis of the Australian game before the second World War, was physically hard even when legitimate and certainly the players from the mining areas of New South Wales were renowned for their fierce tackling.<sup>14</sup> Basically, to cite the observations of Leo Baumgartner, an Austrian import to the local soccer scene in the 1950s, what developed in Australia was a game based on *hit and rush tactics with robust tackling* - in effect a tougher version of the British strength, stamina and speed approach.<sup>15</sup> This style of play led to friction in matches against non-British ethnic teams in the 1950s and 1960s. The latter's continental finesse, which emphasised skill rather than muscle, contrasted with the physical hardness of their opponents and when grit and determination faced artistic expression it was not surprising that on occasions trouble erupted. The low position of the European migrants on the Australian socioeconomic scale and their lack of power in politics and at work must have resulted in massive frustration, both individually and collectively. Soccer gave them a chance to compete against Australians on equal terms and anything which threatened to discriminate against them on the field would be regarded as intolerable. No doubt the situation was also aggravated at times by referees who favoured the Australian blood and guts approach and by anti-migrant taunts from Australian players and spectators.<sup>16</sup> Violence could also break out when ethnic teams played each other. The homeland loyalties which underlay the ethnic clubs also included traditional hatreds so often issues other than soccer were at stake when, for example, Croat faced Serb. In such circumstances cynical tackles and off-the-ball incidents could be seen as political rather than professional fouls. It should be noted that, although most games passed without serious

incident, one authority maintains that *European immigrants were... the common denominator in the majority of cases of violence within soccer.*<sup>17</sup>

All this said, it remains true that soccer today is seen by its devotees as being more violent than their counterparts in other sports rate their own games.<sup>18</sup> Before jumping to the conclusion that ethnicity - as the obvious difference between soccer and other sports - is to blame, it must be pointed out that elite level ethnic teams no longer recruit so exclusively from restricted groups: as the rewards for winning have increased so generally ability rather than ethnic affiliation has become the key variable in team selection. The major site of soccer violence in Australia is not in fact at the elite level but much lower down the player scale. Here, judging from the replies to the survey, ethnic tensions play a role. Yet it must not be forgotten that other factors could be at work, including the poor quality of referees in the lower grades, a matter complained of by 72% of respondents.

The major attack on brutality within soccer has concentrated on the punishment of offenders, though it is worth noting the rehabilitation of the guilty has not been of prime concern. No doubt this approach will continue, although personally the author believes the punishment of clubs by the loss of premiership points would do more to rid the sport of its hatchetmen. In any event it is likely that the law will increasingly intervene and take matters out of the hands of the clubs and even the tribunals. Yet perhaps the best long-term solution lies in education. Sports violence is learned behaviour and certainly males have been socialised into a belief that violence on the sports field is acceptable in our society. Only recently have attempts been made to counter this, first by the teaching of codes of sporting conduct in schools and, second, by the development of games (including soccer) with modified rules to offset the physical advantages which some children have and with improved sportspersonship as an anticipated spinoff.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately funding limitations on this AUSSIE SPORTS program have prevented the development of non-English language versions which ultimately may have adverse consequences regarding the behaviour of ethnic players.

There is little crowd violence in Australian sport but much of what occurs appears to be concentrated around its soccer grounds. One-day cricket has had its disturbances, the annual Bathurst motorcycle races too saw significant crowd disorder, but it is soccer which is considered to be the site of most trouble. This view is shared by those within the sport. More than a third of the soccer-based respondents to the violence survey believed that spectator misbehaviour at soccer matches was excessive.<sup>20</sup>

Soccer also topped the list for most specific types of spectator disorder: vandalism occurred often according to 14.0% of respondents, throwing missiles (21.6%) pitch invasions (26.0%), racial or ethnic abuse (49.0%), and foul language (80.8%). The most common offence was abuse of officials which was observed by 82.7% of respondents, beaten only by the 83.9% for rugby league crowds. Significantly, however, soccer ranked only sixth at 22.0% for common observation of drunkenness which would suggest that other stimulants besides alcohol triggered disorder at matches. To many, both within and outside the sport, the answer is the obvious ethnic rivalry which permeates soccer in Australia

To some extent sports nationalism can be viewed as a potential unifying social force within Australia, particularly as historically sport has been a major avenue through which Australia has projected itself as a nation. Today, in the international arena, sport is Australia's only way of competing with - and on occasions even defeating - the political superpowers. Almost every Australian can recall the nationalistic fervour which greeted *Australia II's* victory in the Americas Cup or can note the delight in some quarters when Australia beats 'the Poms' at anything. Yet it has not been established that European migrants, including British ones, have identified with Australia's international sporting success. Personal observation suggests that at least in soccer visiting overseas club sides have often had more support than the Socceroos or state sides.<sup>21</sup> The sporting nationalism exhibited by many ethnic groups, particularly those from continental Europe has been that of their homeland and at times this has led to violence at soccer matches. When, for example, in the 1960s Croatia played Yugal, whose support came mainly from Serbs and Slavs, past

political struggles and World War Two experiences were symbolised and re-enacted.<sup>22</sup> This has continued. In March 1992 police were brought in by helicopter to quell a crowd riot at a Melbourne soccer ground where a game was being played between Preston Makedonia and Heidelberg Alexander: the issue which provoked the trouble was a dispute thousands of kilometres away in Europe over whether or not Greece had patent rights to the Macedonian name.<sup>23</sup> Even more recently fans of Croatian background repeatedly booed Socceroo players of Serbian extraction in the games against a touring Croatian side. Spectator disorder led to numerous arrests and one ten-minute stoppage in play.” The ethnic mix of Australian cities means that the historical and contemporary political problems of Europe are condensed into a relatively small area. This downside to multiculturalism in Australia is not unique to soccer. An academic study of public disorder in contemporary Australia found that of 288 politically motivated disturbances 32 which involved the participation of ethnic groups were related to events outside Australia.<sup>25</sup>

The one reaction of soccer authorities, the New South Wales Government and some sports journalists has been to call for a de-ethnicisation of the game and, in particular, the dropping of ethnic club names in favour of those reflecting the area in which the club has its ground or headquarters.<sup>26</sup> The Australian Soccer Federation has in fact moved its 1991 position of encouraging the Coca Cola [National] Soccer League teams to phase out ethnic names to demanding such a change for the 1992/93 summer season: a brave decision given the ethnic ties of most of the ASF commissioners.<sup>27</sup> Traditionally European migrant groups have been opposed to such a district system of sports teams which has, however, been favoured by most Australian sports administrators. This structure emerged in the late nineteenth century as a concession to the vast distances between major inhabited areas in Australia. In 1891 over 34 per cent of New South Wales’ population lived in Sydney and 42 per cent of Victoria’s in Melbourne, but the two cities were almost nine hundred kilometres apart, which, considering the state of transportation was too great for any regularly organised competition: weekly matches were feasible only at the

metropolitan level. What emerged were teams based on suburbs, often organised around the electorates of the time. So Australian rules supporters in Melbourne barracked for Collingwood, Carlton, and other distinctively geographically located clubs; and, similarly, rugby league fans in Sydney cheered for Balmain, South Sydney and the like. Such a structure did not appeal to the 'New Australians' who preferred to organise clubs labelled Budapest, Hellas, Macedonia and other nomenclature which signalled the ethnic preference of the members.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless some teams have changed their names voluntarily. In Victoria the Dutch side, Wilhelmina, became Ringwood City in an attempt to secure wider support, though it has been argued that the club had a weak ethnic tradition. Another Victorian side J.U.S.T. (Yugoslav United Soccer Team) became Footscray J.U.S.T. in the early 1970s after receiving a \$100,000 loan from the local council towards improved ground facilities.<sup>29</sup> At times during the past two decades other clubs too have succumbed to pressure from league officials to at least add a district tag to their official name. Yet this has been for economic reasons, either to secure sponsorship by less overtly restricting the identifiable market or in an effort to attract new spectators to soccer. Crowd behaviour appears to have had no part to play.

There are major problems associated with the attempt to de-ethnicise soccer. First, and certainly foremost, is the opposition by the clubs themselves and more especially by their fans: crowds at Hindmarsh Stadium do not cheer for the West Adelaide Sharks but for *Hellas*. When the NSW authorities banned supporters from waving national flags, the response was faces and jackets painted to resemble such flags. Club officials too have featured in the resistance. Tony Topic, president of Sydney CSC, used a match programme to exhort supporters to bring 'as many Croatian flags as possible' to games and not to let 'this oldest Croatian community die'.<sup>30</sup> It is notable also that a ban on making ground announcements in languages other than English appears to have fallen by the wayside.<sup>31</sup> Such staunch opposition has forced the ASF to compromise. Not only have clubs been allowed to retain their logos (which include the

old ethnic names) for a transitional period, but it has been persuaded that Marconi-Fairfield is not an Italian club (despite the red, white and green boomerang on its crest), Sydney Olympic not a Greek one, and to allow Sydney Croatia and Melbourne Croatia to be renamed Sydney CSC and Melbourne CSC (titles which are universally recognised as indicating Croatian Soccer Club!)<sup>32</sup> Second, such reverse multi-culturalism runs counter to current Australian political philosophy and legislation which encourages diversity of cultural experiences rather than assimilation into a mainstream one. Ultimately such measures by the soccer authorities may be declared illegal.<sup>33</sup> Third unless the districts themselves are sufficiently varied in ethnic composition the change in terminology may be meaningless. Fourth, if soccer is genuinely de-ethnicised then, to quote Sam Pappasavas, at the time chairman of South Melbourne Hellas Gunnars and now an Australian Soccer Federation Commissioner, 'by eradicating the ethnicity of the sport you are eradicating the people who have been following soccer for the past thirty years'.<sup>34</sup> Yet, if it is not done, soccer as a major spectator sport may be doomed. Many ethnic-based clubs are on an inclined plane to oblivion simply because their traditional source of support is dwindling as a consequence of a lessening in European migration to Australia. It is quite possible that the crowd problem in Australian soccer simply might disappear along with the spectators.<sup>35</sup>

## NOTES

\* This is a fuller version of papers given to an International Conference on Football held at the University of Aberdeen in April 1992 and to the joint ASSH/NASSH Conference held in Honolulu in January 1993. I am grateful for comments and assistance from Robyn Day, Roy Jones, John McTier, Phillip Moore, Bill Murray and Janice Vemplew.

1. W. Vamplew, *Sports Violence in Australia: Its Extent and control*, Australian Sports Commission, Canberra, 1991. The survey was not directed at any particular sport, but questioned a total of 906 players, coaches administrators officials media representatives and spectators across some eighty sports in an effort to assist the Australian Sports Commission to determine if there was a general sports violence problem in Australia and what measures to combat this would receive support from sportspeople. Forty-seven fully completed surveys referred to soccer. Although a small sample, it is noteworthy that 59.6 per cent of those respondents felt that on-field violence in their sport was excessive as compared to 32.8 per cent for all sports. The survey also covered crowd behaviour but these results were published separately as W. Vamplew, 'Sports Crowd

Disorder. An Australian Survey' in J. O'Hara (ed.) *Crowd Violence at Australian Sport*, A.S.S.H. Studies in Sports History No. 7, Australian Society for Sports History, Sydney 1992. More research is needed, particularly on the lower grades of soccer, to assess whether the perception of violence is illusory.

- 2 Soccer, let alone its violence problem has not received much academic attention in Australia Bill Murray and Philip Mosely are writing *A Social History of Soccer in Australia* with a spinoff contribution to B Stoddart & W Vamplew, *Sport in Australia: A Social History* Cambridge U.P., in preparation. Mosely also wrote the entry on soccer for the recently published *Oxford Companion to Australian Sport* edited by W Vamplew, K Moore, J O'Hara, R Cashman and I Jobling on behalf of the Australian Society for Sports History. Currently he is researching Serbian-Croatian soccer rivalry which is a follow on to his doctoral thesis *A Social History of Soccer in New South Wales 1880-1957 Ph.D.*, University of Sydney 1987. Roy Hay (Deakin) writes regularly for Australian soccer publications and is researching & both violence in Victorian soccer and the role of the Croatian community in the development of soccer in the Geelong area of that state. Philip Moore and Roy Jones (Curtin) are examining ethnic soccer in Perth, Western Australia John Hughson (University of Western Sydney) published 'Australian Soccer: 'Ethnic' a 'Aussie'? The Search or an Image' in the *Current Affairs Bulletin March 1992* and is now waking on soccer violence and deviance.
- 3 This paragraph is based on data in C. Price, 'Immigration and Ethnic Origin' in W. Vamplew (ed.), *Australian Historical Statistics*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon, Sydney 1987, pp. 2-22.
- 4 For a brief history of soccer in Australia see P. Mosely, 'Soccer' in Vamplew et al., *The Oxford Companion to Australian Sport*.
- 5 Although not an exclusive explanation, one reason is that both Australian rules and rugby union (from which rugby league emerged in 1908) established themselves before soccer. G. Blainey, *A Game of Our Own: The Origins of Australian Football* Information Australia, Melbourne, 1990; T. Hickie, *The Origins of Ruby Union* in Sydney. Ph.D., University of N.S.W., 1992 In correspondence Bill Murray has suggested that many of the British Soccer fans and players became less enthusiastic because of the standard of the game in Australia
- 6 For a critical overview of the sporting passion allegations see R. Cashman, 'The Australian Sporting Obsession', *Sporting Traditions* 4.1 (1987), pp. 47-55.
- 7 This is a little studied issue in Australian history. One chapter in R. Unikoski's *Communal Endeavours: Migrant Organisations in Melbourne*, ANU Press, Canberra, 1978, looks at sporting organisations. Brian Stoddart has some comment in his 'Ethnic Influences' contribution to the *Oxford Companion to Australian Sport*. A few Aborigines, far less than in rugby league a Australian rules, have played soccer at an elite level. One of the best known, Charles Perkins, whose football earnings helped pay his educational expenses enroute to becoming Australia's first Aboriginal graduate, has acknowledged that he was more readily accepted by the European migrants than by white Australians. Nevertheless, most Aborigines who have adopted white person's sport have turned to more mainstream *Australian* games C. Tatz,,

*Aborigines in Sport* ASSH Studies in Sport History No. 3, Australian Society for Sport History, Adelaide 1987.

- 8 For details on the formation of early ethnic clubs see Mosely's thesis, 297-306. The schism came about because of alleged discrimination by the ruling bodies which did not select ethnic players for representative teams and refused to promote ethnic-based teams beyond the lower grades. S. Grant, *Jack Pollard's Soccer Records*, Jack Pollard, Sydney 1974. See also F. Parsons, 'Blame Officials for Soccer Slump', *Sport Magazine* 1.1 (1954), pp. 45-46. In correspondence Bill Murray has argued that the split was economic in origin with those clubs which drew crowds not wanting to share the gate money.
- 9 S. Kainasz, 'It's Time to Australianise the Round-Ball code', *Weekend Australian* 11-12 February 1989. English-born Johnny Warren, ex-Australian soccer captain and now media commentator, also recalls that when he began to play soccer was) considered a wog game. L. Writer, *Winning: Face to Race With Australian Sporting Legends, Ironbark, Chatswood, (NSW) 1990,15.*
- 10 H. Reynolds, 'Violence in Australian History' in D. Chappell, P. Grabosky & H. Strang, *Australian Violence: Contemporary Perspectives*, Australian Institute of criminology, Canberra 1991.
- 11 R. Hughes, *The Fatal Shore*, Collins Harvill, London 1987. A revisionist attempt to provide a counterweight to the unremitting horror stories of Hughes still shows that over three-quarters of all convicts were flogged at least once and is forced to conclude that there was an 'ever present fear of physical punishment' (S. Nicholas, *Convict Workers*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988, pp. 181-182).
- 12 R. Broome, 'Aborigines' in G. Aplin, S.G. Foster & M. McKeman, *Australians: An Historical Dictionary*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon, Sydney 1987, pp. 6-7. S.K. Mukherjee, A. Scandia, D. Dagger & W. Matthews, *Source Book of Australian Criminal and Social Statistics 1804-1988*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, 1989 and S.K. Mukherjee, J.R. Walker & E.N. Jacobsen *Crime and Punishment in the Colonies: A Statistical Profile*, History Project Inc., Sydney 1986. Whether recent upward movements in many serious crime rates are part of a cycle rather than a trend remains to be established. The author is working on a history of sports violence in Australia and is attempting to devise quantitative indices of societal violence: as might be anticipated the task is fraught with difficulties.
- 13 Depending upon the specific category (in ascending order radio sports programs, radio commentaries newspapers, television news, television commentaries and television sports programs) around two-thirds to three-quarters of all respondents to the survey believed that the media glorified or condoned violence in sport
- 14 Mosely, thesis, pp. 244-245.
- 15 L. Baumgartner, *The Little Professor of soccer*, Marketing Productions, Sydney 1968. p. 104.

- 16 Mosely, thesis, pp. 316-317.
- 17 Mosely, thesis, p. 308.
- 18 The figures for major male sports were soccer (60.0%). Australian rules (52.8%), rugby league (51.7%), rugby union (46.2%), hockey (45.5%), basketball (43.8%). baseball (40.0%), cricket (26.9%). tennis (22.2%).
- 19 J. Clough & R. Traill, *Report of Australian Sports Commission Study of Modified Sports*, Australian Sports Commission, Canberra 1989.
- 20 Figures for other major sports were, in descending order, rugby league (19.4%), Australian rules (18.6%), basketball (16.7%), baseball (13.3%), netball (10.0%), cricket (8.2%), rugby union (8.0%), tennis (5.6%) and softball (5.0%). For a historical view see R. Lynch, 'Disorder on the Sidelines of Australian Sport *Sporting Traditions*, 8.1 (1991), pp. . . 50-75.
- 21 For a specific case when Australia played Hajduk Split see J. Wells 'Socceroos' Reception a National Disgrace - But Which Nation?', *Weekend Australian* 9-10 June 1990.
- 22 B. James, 'We are Playing Soccer-Not Politics', *Sports Magazine* 16.1, June 1963, pp. 36-7.
- 23 *Australian* 17 March 1992.
- 24 'Winners and Losers', *Inside Sport* August 1992, p. 8.
- 25 R.J. Holton & P. Fletcher, *Public Disorder in Contemporary Australia*, Report to Criminology Research Council, Canberra 1988, p. 43.
- 26 R. Gatt, 'Ethnic Names Alien to the Game', *Australian* 6 November 1991.
- 27 *Australian* 13 December 1991; 29-30 August 1992. This appears to be a marketing attempt to broaden the spectrum of spectators rather than specifically a crowd control mechanism. It should also be noted that not all national league teams are ethnic-based though those that remain dominant both numerically and politically.
- 28 For the history of the district system in New South Wales soccer see Mosely, thesis, pp. 77-78, 108. It remains to be determined whether this was primarily a metropolitan phenomenon.
- 29 L. Allan, 'Ethnic and Race Politics: Reverse Multi-culturalism and the Politics of Soccer', *Soccer Action* 2 September 1981.
- 30 R. Gatt 'Politics not the Code, Fostered By Insular Clubs', *Australian* 29 October 1992.

- 31 R. Gatt, 'Ethnic Feuds Give the Game Its Bad Name', *Australian* 3 January 1990.
- 32 'Ethnic Names Out in Compromise', *Australian* 29-30 August 1992; J. Wells, 'Mystery Seems the Best Bet on De-Ethnicity', *Australian* 1 October 1992.
- 33 However, the Racial Discrimination Legislation Amendment Bill which has passed its second reading, could also be used against some actions of the ethnic clubs as it outlaws 'gestures or the wearing of or display of clothing, signs, flags, emblems' likely 'to stir up hatred... against a person a group on grounds of race colour or national or ethnic origin'. F. Devine, 'Colour Me Angry, the Ghastly Clique Has Struck Again'. *Australian* 1 February 1993.
- 34 Alan, *loc.cit.*
- 35 In correspondence Bill Murray rejects this conclusion and argues that Australian soccer is healthy pointing to the performance of the two youth teams, the Olympic team (almost all of them locally born) and the Australians playing in Europe. There is, of course, the possibility that new clubs, representative of new migrant groups, will emerge: Perth already has the Chindits, the Assegais and Chile (R. Jones & P. MOON, "'He Only Has Eyes for Poms'": Soccer, Ethnicity and Locality in Metropolitan Perth', Paper presented at Australian Sociological Association Conference, Perth 1991, p. 13). Soccer is indeed the world game and therein may lie its salvation in Australia.

## **‘HE ONLY HAS EYES FOR POMS’: SOCCER, ETHNICITY AND LOCALITY IN PERTH\***

**Roy Jones and Philip Moore**

Part of the title of this paper, the phrase ‘he only has eyes for Poms’, was a remark made during the 1991 season by a member of the local Portuguese (social) Club as he attempted to account for the declining fortunes of the semi-professional Fremantle Benfica men’s soccer team. The team was experiencing a losing season and, after an early change in coaches, the ethnic composition of the team also began to change. Where at the start of the season there had been a number of Portuguese players (about five in all), this number was decreasing. The member of the local Portuguese Club was upset that the team was losing and that the new coach, himself a Pom, was replacing a number of players on the team, including several of the Portuguese players, with Poms. One of the Portuguese players who had been replaced was our commentator’s son. For our Portuguese friend, it was best for Benfica to win; but, failing that, better to lose with Portuguese players than Poms. What was happening to the composition of the team seemed to suggest to this man, and publicly to anyone else who cared to note, that the Portuguese club was losing control of its own team. For our friend, the worry was that if such a perception became widespread among members of the club, team or spectators the participation of the club in the competition could be undermined.

In Perth, as across Australia, soccer is an ethnic game. Indeed, when international soccer is broadcast on Australian television it tends to be on the Special Broadcasting Service— known locally as ‘the ethnic channel’. Soccer is marked as an ethnic game in a number of other ways. For example,

in what has been for some time a contentious practice, the clubs are named by ethnicity in addition to a local title — so, for example, we find North Perth Croatia, Floreat Athena, Fremantle Benfica and Spearwood Dalmatinac — and the teams are controlled by the various ethnic social clubs in the metropolitan area. In this sporting arena, relationships between the clubs and the soccer teams that publicly represent them are cast in ethnic terms, and to participate in the sport is to be marked as being probably ethnic and in some way non-Australian.<sup>1</sup> In this arena for ethnic competition, there is a need for the social clubs to represent and indeed to celebrate the cultural significance of their ethnic constituencies. To accomplish this the ethnic clubs must strive for success on the field. Such diverse characteristics as ethnicity, locality and success do not always come together neatly. In this paper, we explore the often conflicting goals of gaining local support, constructing and maintaining ethnic identities and achieving success on the playing field as they have been sought by soccer clubs in Perth, WA.

Football, known as soccer in Australia and in other parts of the world where it competes less successfully with other codes, is the most popular game in the world. In some places it has been common to identify national interest in the sport to the point where one author, writing of Brazil, identified an obsession with the game that she, as an American, characterised as ‘soccer fever’.<sup>2</sup> It was in Central America that border hostilities led to what has been characterised as a ‘soccer war’, not because soccer caused the disagreement between the two countries but because the result of a qualifying game for the World Cup provided the ‘trigger’ which led directly to the clash. What interests us in this paper is not simply the world-wide popularity of the sport or the significance sometimes granted to it; we accept these as a given. What seems clear to us from our reading of the literature dealing with soccer is that, while the game may have the same basic structure around the world, it is not locally understood or used in precisely the same ways in different national and ethnic contexts<sup>3</sup>. The game is given different meanings in different places.

A focus on the alternative meanings attributed to sporting phenomena is certainly in keeping with the analyses of others who have

examined such diverse cases as the way the Pueblo Indians of the United States have adopted baseball and infused it with their own witchcraft beliefs<sup>4</sup> or the way the Trobriand Islanders of Papua New Guinea have transformed cricket into a game of their own in which display and symbolic competition count for more than winning or losing.<sup>5</sup>

In Australia, as in the United States and Canada, soccer is played but has always remained quite marginal to the local professional sporting world. While many see great potential for the game in Australia, soccer does not successfully compete for support at the level of rugby league, Australian rules or even basketball, it is, however, an important participant sport. Indeed, in Western Australia soccer is one of the most popular junior participant sports, although there is a tendency for participation to fall off sharply after the age of about thirteen<sup>6</sup>

Soccer, like other sports, does not exist merely as a game, with precisely the same understandings shared wherever it is played. The game must be given local significance if it is to arouse the passions of those who follow sport in general, and soccer in particular. It is not difference merely for the sake of difference that interests us here. Guiding our account is the argument that the processes of professionalisation and the commodification of soccer in Western Australia both are and are seen to be compromised by the various emphases given to ethnicity in the game. Soccer is a public arena in which ethnic identities can be asserted and reinvented in changing circumstances. If professionalisation and commodification are general trends in the organisation of soccer, as they currently appear to be, then ethnicity is certainly a significant limiting factor which gives the game as it is played here its social, cultural and economic particularity. But to this we must also add that until now it is those individuals who identify themselves as being ethnic who have provided soccer with its most significant economic support. We do not argue that all members of every ethnic group must construct their ethnicity around soccer. Our point is that soccer provides a significant vehicle for the process of producing and maintaining a distinct ethnic identity.

*The Macquarie Dictionary*, which identifies itself as ‘the Australian dictionary’, includes as an entry ‘wogball’ which is, in the final analysis, defined as a derogatory Australian colloquialism for soccer. Although this entry in the dictionary has recently become the subject of strong protest by some, and for very good reasons, it does identify soccer as being a game which is in some way ‘not really’ Australian the presence of which owes more to the migrants from the Mediterranean and eastern countries of Europe than to local sporting tradition. This characterisation of soccer is reasonably accurate for the period following World War Two; but it is certainly not representative of the entire history of soccer in Australia. Some historical background is necessary.

It is commonly accepted that soccer was first introduced into Australia in New South Wales in 1880 by J. W. Fletcher.<sup>7</sup> The game was played on Parramatta Common and involved the local Ring’s School and the Wanderers. Vamplew has noted that:

The recognisably British nomenclature of the latter team was also reflected in the organising bodies throughout the Australian colonies with the Southern British Football Association in New South Wales, the Anglo-Australian Football Association in Victoria and the British Football Associations appropriately prefixed by the colonial title in Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania.<sup>8</sup>

Soccer was brought to Australia from the public schools of Britain, but, by the end of World War One it was becoming a working-class game among the English and Scots workers who had migrated to Australia. In Western Australia, both the English and Scots migrants founded local associations in the 1890s. In 1909, when a Western Australian team toured the eastern states, it was made up of players from these local associations and played in the mining areas of NSW and in South Australia where the team encountered players with similar backgrounds.

Soccer is not the only code of football played in Western Australia. Australian Rules football was established in Western Australia by 1885, just before the founding of the various local soccer associations. Those who favoured the ‘round-ball’ or ‘British’ code had to compete against ‘Aussie

Rules' for both participants and spectators. From 1910 soccer did not fare so well in this competition and was to remain very much a working-class migrants' game, associated with the English and the Scots, rather than with those who identified themselves as the inhabitants of newly independent and nationalistic Australia. Separated from the mainstream sporting concerns of Western Australians, the game was fostered and nurtured as an ethnic sport, albeit with the somewhat half-hearted ethnic status attributed to the British in Australia

Following World War Two the Australian economy was officially perceived to be in need of more workers and the country in need of more inhabitants. Many of these were found in eastern and southern European-Mediterranean countries. Italians, Greeks and others who arrived in Australia brought with them their own sporting traditions -particularly that of soccer. With the arrival of these 'new Australians', soccer became even more strongly identified as an ethnic sport in Australia. The period immediately following World War Two was the age when 'wog ball' became a colloquialism. Local social clubs founded by migrants from the various European countries, such as the Portuguese Club, began organising sporting teams and in the 1950s their soccer teams rapidly came to dominate the local leagues. As the ethnic communities tended to be somewhat localised (in the Perth metropolitan area this meant in old, inner city areas, in the vineyards and market gardens on the fringes of the city or near the fishing boat harbour), so too did the soccer teams.

In 1977 the Philips Soccer League was formed as the first national professional league, with teams from NSW, VIC, QLD, SA and ACT, but not WA. Most of these (professional) teams were ethnically controlled and supported Soccer, however, has not remained the sole property of ethnic groups in Australia. Both state and federal governments have made moves to try to remove soccer from a purely ethnic arena. An Australian national side was formed in the 1960s. It has toured and competed in a number of international competitions, including winning the right to represent the South Pacific Zone in the 1974 World Cup. In an attempt to play down the obvious ethnic divisions within soccer in Australia, and to emphasise the

representation of the entire nation, the side is known as the 'Socceroos.' If the Socceroos represent a deliberate attempt to unite the nation through the creation of a soccer team which does not have an identifiable ethnic component, the ethnic dimension of the game remains prominent in the local and national competitions. The 'tribalism' often attributed to those involved with the game in Australia, as evidenced by the sometimes 'fierce' ethnic loyalties of the teams' supporters and the occasionally violent confrontations at soccer matches, remains a central part of soccer in Australia. The national competition has gone through a number of changes since 1977, including becoming the Coca-Cola Soccer League in 1991. The perceived problem of ethnicity within the sport has remained. In December 1991, the Australian Soccer Federation announced that ethnic names were to be abolished from the national league 'as part of an ambitious plan designed to establish the sport as Australia's most popular football code within 10 years'.<sup>9</sup> With popularity, the Federation clearly believes, will come commercial success.

Ethnicity is certainly seen as a barrier to this success, not only in itself, but because violence, or the threat of violence, is a recurrent problem at Australian soccer matches. In early June 1991, in Perth, a disturbance broke out at a match between Spearwood Dalmatinac and North Perth Croatia. Several flares were thrown onto the grounds, the Yugoslav flag was burnt and, at the end, a nearby ethnic musing home was 'defaced with paint.' Following a board meeting of the Soccer Federation of Western Australia, the Secretary announced that:

We do not want this element of foreign nationalistic viewpoints in soccer . . . the executive board of the federation has taken the step to ban all National Flags apart from the Australian flag and the state flag from the grounds<sup>10</sup>.

This ruling followed the decision of the national league to ban foreign flags following an incident at one of its games. The rule concerning flags has been enforced quite rigorously in Western Australia. There are, however, ways around it, ways in which ethnicity can be made readily

apparent without recourse to a flag. Both young and old supporters of North Perth Croatia, clearly a potentially sensitive ethnic group in 1991 — particularly about their relationship to Spearwood Dalmatinac — turned up to fixtures decked out in jackets, track suits and jumpers displaying their Croatian national colours.

There is a current and recurrent tension between what is often identified as ethnic ‘tribalism’, which is publicly disdained by so many, yet which remains entrenched in soccer, and government programs celebrating Australia as a multicultural nation. This becomes particularly apparent when government financial support for the sport is examined. It was only in 1986 and 1987, that the Western Australian government was offering the local competition \$5 million towards the development of the game. A further \$5 million was to be raised through a public subscription. This offer was a considerable increase on the \$750 000 offered in 1985, before a government-appointed task force had investigated the future of the game in Western Australia. The funds were dependent upon the Soccer Federation of Western Australia agreeing to recommendations made by the task force. Among the recommendations was one that called for an end to the ethnic identities of the teams. The Premier noted that:

The time has come for soccer to appeal to a broad spectrum of the Australian community instead of the sectoral interests it has served in the past . . . and that even though . . . ethnic communities had been the backbone of soccer since the war . . . a new direction [is] required if soccer [is] to become a major power in the sporting life of Australia.<sup>11</sup>

The \$10 million plan for a central headquarters for soccer did not meet with immediate and unreserved approval by all involved in the game. As the government offer required the removal of ethnic names, many of the clubs did not support acceptance of the funding. After a very messy dispute within the local soccer community the proposal was, in the end rejected. On this occasion ethnicity won out over the offer of big money. As the President of the Soccer Federation of WA had noted a few years earlier, given the money that the ethnic communities had contributed to their local

ethnic clubs 'Why shouldn't they expect to see their name proudly associated with their club, and who are we to deny them that privilege — no not a privilege, that right'.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps equally interesting is that, while soccer does provide a forum for social statements to be made concerning the significance of ethnicity among ethnic groups, most accounts dealing explicitly with ethnicity and multiculturalism in Australia pass over sport with a deafening silence. Sport in general and soccer in particular are not seen as significant enough or, perhaps, as politically correct enough even to rate a mention in texts such as the Bottomley and de Lepervanche volume *Ethnicity, Class and Gender in Australia* (1984) or Jock Collins' *Migrant Hands in a Distant Land* (1991).<sup>13</sup>

While soccer has always had ethnic connotations in Western Australia, it was following World War Two that the game expanded as a multi-ethnic competition. The migrants from different European countries were, to a greater or lesser extent excluded from mainstream' Australian life and tended to settle in suburbs where they could create close ethnic communities. Aspects of these communities can still be identified in a social mapping of Perth. As well as residing near one another, the new migrants founded ethnically based social clubs in the areas where they made their homes. These social clubs were meeting places for migrants originally from the same areas in Europe and, as the clubs became established, they turned their efforts to providing the sorts of entertainments experienced by the migrants before coming to Australia. One such form of entertainment was soccer. The clubs began to play against one another, then joined the existing local soccer league and, by the late 1950s, had come to dominate it. In so far as the soccer teams grew out of the social clubs and the social clubs were established on ethnic lines, most of the major soccer teams in Perth are now organised on an ethnic basis. Even when their names would seem to indicate the lack of an ethnic association, such as the Kelmscott' Roos, there is still an ethnicity attributed to the team by the other clubs and those who follow the league: Kelmscott is identified as being a team of 'Poms'.

With the relative decline of European migration to Australia over the last quarter of a century, two significant changes began to take place in the Perth region, namely the residential dispersal of the migrant population and the resultant fragmentation of the close locational relationship between ethnic communities and clubs. Writing of these local changes, Dreher and Palmer note that:

New membership to the predominantly ethnic clubs dropped, and new families tended to move away from the old ethnic communities to more outlying suburbs. This has now resulted in a geographic separation between the clubs and their membership.<sup>14</sup>

This is most easily shown by presenting a brief case study of the current significant locations of the North Perth Croatia club.

The distribution of the former Yugoslav (predominantly, Croatian) born population of Perth (Figure 1) mirrors that of most of the Mediterranean migrants to the city. Major concentrations are found in the old, higher density inner suburbs of both Perth and Fremantle in an Antipodean reflection of Burgess's (1925) classic 'zone in transition'.<sup>15</sup> In addition, Yugoslav born migrants settled in the market gardening areas of Spearwood, south of Fremantle, Balcatta and Wanneroo, north of Perth and in the Swan Valley vineyard area, north of Guildford. A number of ethnic clubs, including Spearwood Dalmatinac, North Perth Croatia and Stirling Macedonia were established in these Yugoslav areas.

Even in 1971, however, dispersal of the Yugoslav-born population and, even more so, of their Australian born descendants was under way from these original core areas.<sup>16</sup> This can be seen, for example, in the higher than average concentrations of Yugoslav born inhabitants in cheaper, new housing areas, such as Belmont, to the east of the city centre.

Information from the North Perth Croatia program for the 1991 season illustrates many aspects of this local diaspora on the operation of the club. The club's training ground in Mt Hawthorn is, indeed, adjacent to the team's nominal 'base' in North Perth, but their main playing venue is the former (1962) Empire Games stadium at Perry Lakes, north of

Claremont. The administrative address is in Fremantle, where there is a major Croatian community centre at North Fremantle and North Perth Croatia operates a 'southern' training ground in Beacons field, a suburb of Fremantle. The change rooms at this southern training ground were severely damaged by fire in 1991, but whether this was an ethnic, political act remains uncertain. The club's major sponsor is DOM-UIE, a construction company based in the industrial suburb of Kwinana, on the south-western fringe of the metropolitan area, and the other advertisers in the program and at the club's home ground, most of whom have Slavic names, are scattered throughout the city.

What this shows is a shift from the close local association of an ethnic community and their soccer team to a situation where the soccer team, or more specifically, the soccer ground, becomes a focus for a dispersed ethnic community. Crowds at soccer games in Perth include individuals of both sexes and virtually all ages: babies, children, adolescents, adults and the aged. Children, normally dispersed throughout the metropolitan area, may play together with others of similar ethnic origin while adults socialise and watch the game. For the normally residentially dispersed supporters, it is the soccer fixture that has become a major rationale for coming together as a group and publicly expressing their shared ethnicity and that, for brief but regular moments, allows them to become more than merely members of an ethnic category or some 'imagined community'.<sup>17</sup> Visit a North Perth Croatia 'home' game, for example, and one witnesses families and supporters of all ages dressed in their 'national' colours, and notes the wealth of Croatian video cassettes and music tapes for sale. Attempts to remove ethnicity from soccer may potentially deny such social occasions to the very people who have sustained the game socially and economically in Perth for more than a generation.

With the dispersal of the members of the various ethnic communities throughout the metropolitan area and the semi- professionalisation of the league, the playing membership of the teams has undergone a change. No longer are the players for each team drawn from the membership of single

local ethnic communities, Now the clubs, in their push to produce competitive and winning teams, recruit the best players that they can afford wherever they can find them. In Perth this now involves a competition with the national league as teams from both Leagues strive to attract and sign the best players.<sup>18</sup> Ethnicity is no longer a requirement for being a player on a given team. It is perceived as desirable by many clubs and fans when ethnicity and ability can be brought together within an organisation but, as in the case of Fremantle Benfica noted above, it is not seen as a necessity.

Players on the different teams are recruited and remunerated by the clubs. In Western Australia, the money the players receive is not sufficient for anyone to make a good living solely by playing soccer, but it certainly does make participation that much more attractive to the players. Indeed, payments are sufficiently attractive for teams to be able to bring in players from overseas in order to make their teams more competitive. As the economic fortunes of the various clubs in the league vary, so too do their sponsorships, their gate receipts and therefore, the amount of money they are able to pay their players. Some teams are known as “bigger spenders” than other, less solvent teams.<sup>19</sup> From informal discussions with players it would seem that the amount players currently receive varies between about \$100 and \$300 per game. There may not seem to be a lot of difference among the amounts paid to a player on any given week, but over a twenty game season the differences generated by winning bonuses and the like do become apparent. There are regular whispers and complaints about certain wealthy teams in the competition purchasing the best players and thereby making the league less competitive overall.

The league in Perth is not exceedingly successful in financial terms. The costs associated with the game can be quite significant, as has become apparent in Fremantle Benfica’s recent dispute with the East Fremantle Council over the cost of a home ground. With respect to the receipt of supporting funds, soccer has long had a stormy relationship with the state government. Professional soccer currently receives virtually no state help. This makes the professional league a fairly marginal enterprise in Western

Australia and has forced teams to look elsewhere in order to ensure long-term success.

It is notable that in 1987 the most numerous migrant group in Perth, the Italians, chose to amalgamate their three local teams, Fremantle (Tricolore), Perth (Azzuri) and Balcatta (Etna), into a single Perth Italia club in order to achieve greater financial, and therefore sporting, success. It was not just for success in the local competition that the teams decided to amalgamate. They were looking to position themselves so that they could bid for a spot in the national league (then the 'Super League'). If Western Australia were to be allocated an entry, as had been mooted for some time, there was no procedure in place to determine how the entry would be selected or organised. Spearwood Dalmatinac had made an unsuccessful attempt to gain entry into the national league in 1983. The Italian clubs clearly saw that the prize of the control of the local entry into the national league would be worth a pooling of their soccer assets. Justifying their efforts, representatives of the new Italia club noted that they had 'already set aside \$70 000 towards promoting a greater awareness of soccer' and that 'The super league team could become more widely supported than the West Coast Eagles or the Perth Wildcats.' In pooling the playing talent from three clubs, the new club would be far more competitive on the pitch. In breaking down the local support for the three Italian clubs, the new Perth Italia soccer team would have far better prospects for real economic success.

In order to enhance the reputation of their own ethnic club, in relation to the other ethnic clubs engaged in soccer in Western Australia, each organisation works to field the best possible team. The better the team, the better the local support and sponsorship, the more money the club can offer to pay to the players and, hence, the more glory for the ethnic club. The quality and performance of the team reflects directly on the ethnic community. The teams may be comprised of players of very different ethnic backgrounds but each club is still controlled and managed basically by a single ethnic group. The players, as they have become more

professionally minded will frequently change clubs between seasons in search of a better deal.

It is, therefore, in the domains of administrative control and public support that soccer in Western Australia is most evidently an ethnic game played in an ethnic arena. There is little publicity in the Perth media for the local game. Media concern is limited to one columnist who writes regularly on soccer in the *West Australian*, and who does a very good job of providing the scant amount of coverage that is received, and a weekly column by another journalist in *The Sunday Times*. There was an attempt a few years ago to produce a local soccer newspaper but, due to the lack of a sufficiently large market, this lasted for only a few issues. Therefore, knowledge and understanding of the local semi-professional game can only be gained either through some particular ethnic association or, in the absence of membership in an ethnic social club, through regular attendance at the league's fixtures.

One of the notable features of the Perth soccer scene over recent decades has been the ethnic organisation of the sport. With the commercialisation of the game there has been a weakening of emphasis on the ethnicity of the players — but it has hardly disappeared entirely, as our Portuguese friend quoted at the beginning of the paper so clearly indicated — and a continued ethnic control of the clubs. Ethnicity has been confined more to the social life of the clubhouse and the stands. However, since semi-professional soccer remains by and large an ethnic and a European game in Western Australia, it has been unable to generate an audience of sufficient size to transform the sport into a truly viable economic concern. Furthermore, this is seen by some as locking the sport into a declining support base as the European born component of Path's population declines. Spearwood Dalmatinac President Tony Petkovich has noted that:

Our kids are now second- and third-generation Australians who are not that interested in soccer and keep away from the sport because of the ethnic violence and problems between nationalities.<sup>21</sup>

Several clubs with teams in the Western Australian Professional Soccer Federation are reported to have taken steps to register non-ethnic team names. It is interesting that, while visiting the Dalmatinac club during a match, we noted a publicly posted application for membership. Significantly, the form requested information about the applicant's ethnic background. This particular applicant identified himself as Italian. It would seem that Petkovich's remarks might becoming mirrored in his club's membership. However, the effects of the ethnic presence in soccer are not entirely negative. In remaining a marginal 'ethnic' game, soccer in Perth has also (and, it would seem, quite fortuitously) avoided the commercial excesses that frequently follow the successful commodification of sports, such as basketball and one-day cricket. The game has remained organised and played on a fairly small scale and has thus not been taken away from those who have traditionally organised and played it.

It now seems quite clear that Western Australia will become part of the national soccer competition in the next two or three years. If the effects of the AFL on the WAFL are any guide, one would expect the presence of a local team in the national competition to undermine the economic viability of the local league, particularly in the short term. Even more interesting to note in the immediate future will be the machinations of the local clubs as they work to organise the nature of Western Australia's entry into the national competition. The successful amalgamation of the three Italian teams, which, physically, had been quite widely separated in Perth, and a failed attempt to create a 'greater' Fremantle club incorporating Fremantle Benfica, Spearwood Dalmatinac, Cockburn United and Melville Allemania indicate that, as an organisational trend at least, ethnicity is still more significant than locality.

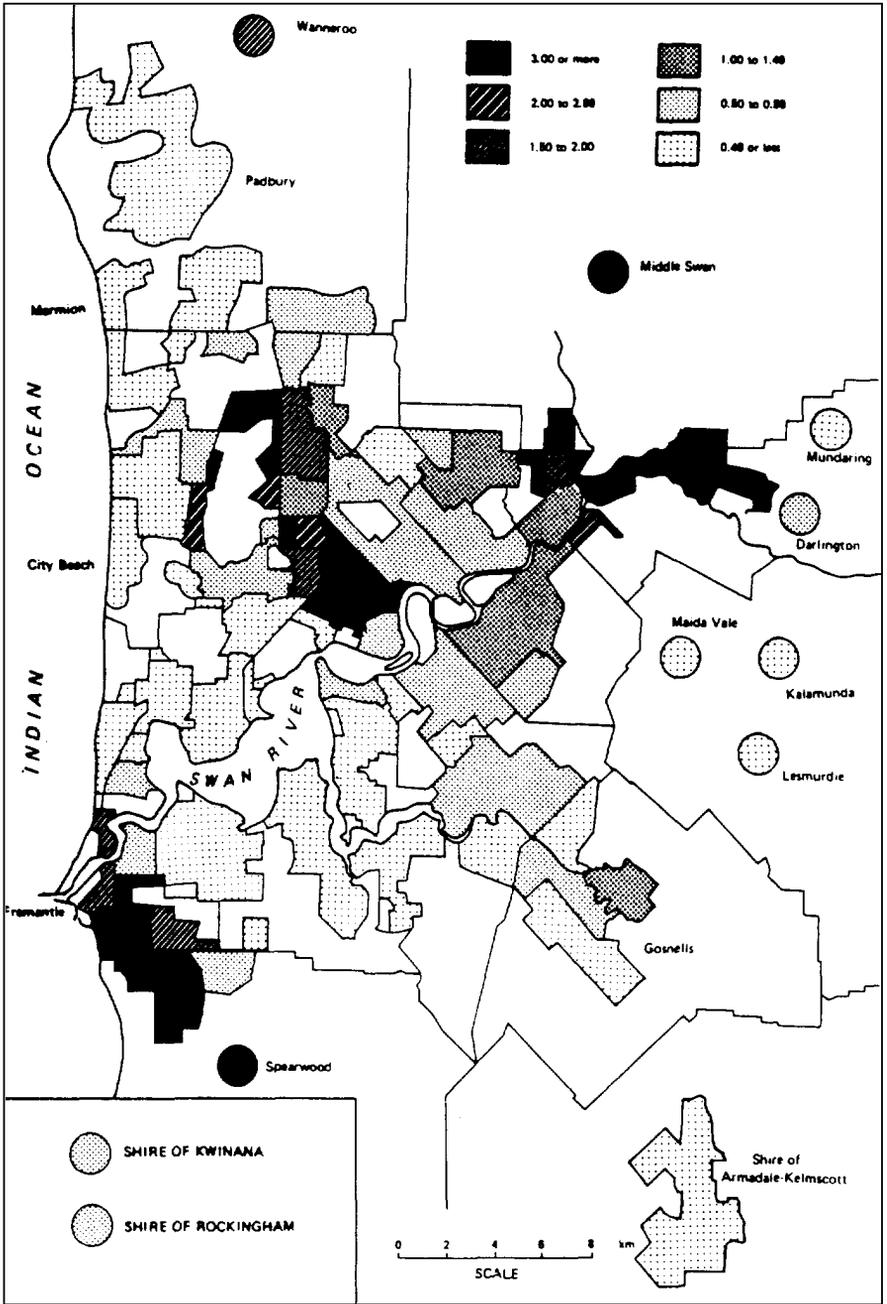
On a final note, it is interesting to note the appearance of a new set of ethnic soccer clubs appearing around Perth in the 1980s and 1990s. A growing number of clubs from Asia, Africa and Latin America (such as Chindits, Assegai and Chile) are now competing in the amateur and social leagues. Should any of these clubs succeed in attaining on-field success and semi-professional status, a whole new generation of migrants will perhaps

start the whole process over once again, although now in the changed context of subservience to what will be a national competition which includes a Western Australian side. Such a development would be likely to continue the dynamic situation socially generated and maintained by the tension between local support and ethnic organisation.

## NOTES

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YUGOSLAV BORN

## **BALKAN POLITICS IN AUSTRALIAN SOCCER**

**Philip Mosely**

Soccer in Australia has always been associated with immigrants. Before the Second World War they were British, after the War British, European, South American and Asian. That's not to say native Australians were not involved. They were, in big numbers in certain places, notably the non-Australian Rules states of New South Wales and Queensland. However as a general rule the most distinguishable feature of the game has been its migrant presence.

European immigrants became involved in Australian soccer for numerous reasons, foremost of which was then simple love of a game, a game that during the inter-war years had come to infatuate so many all over the world. Yet soccer clubs served more purposes for migrants than just entertaining a recently acquired passion.<sup>1</sup> The clubs' utility was immense. They provided a means of communal networking centred on material support; they served as emotional bulwarks against an often hostile host society; they helped preserve cultural identity. In addition, migrant soccer clubs were used as rallying points for expressing intense nationalism. Numerous ethnic groups were involved, including Greeks, Macedonians and Cypriots, but the most extreme example, and the focus of this article, was afforded by Australia's Balkan factions. Among Croatian, Serbian and Yugoslav elements ethnic loyalties ran strong, and with the formation of Balkan Australian soccer clubs politics came to mix easily with football? The story of Balkan immigration to Australia is long and complicated but, in brief, Croatian and Serbian migration occurred in the early post-war years under refugee and displaced persons' schemes. Both elements were fleeing Tito's communist regime as it sought to nullify Croatian and Serbian nationalism in order to establish a federal socialist state. Of course Tito's Communist (Partizan) Yugoslavs were also on the hunt for fascist (Ustashi)

Croats and monarchist (Chetnik) Serbs. It was pay-back time, and blood did not stop flowing merely because the war had ended.<sup>3</sup>

The post-war arrival of Croatian and Serbian elements in Australia supplemented a prewar Yugoslav population. However the latter was distinctly different. Comprised mostly of Croats, particularly from Dalmatia, it was known for its strong peasant party and labour affiliations. Concentrated in mining centres like Broken Hill, it developed a strong socialist streak that in the inter-war years sought close ties with the Communist Party in Yugoslavia. That did not necessarily translate into opposition to the different Balkan nationalities but it did mean support for a united workers Yugoslav state. When therefore Tito's regime emerged after the War, the pre-existing Yugoslav population in Australia gravitated towards it. There was no opposition to Croats or Serbs *per se* but there was opposition to fascism, to the monarchy and to those parochial loyalties that denied the spirit of pan Yugoslav nationalism.<sup>4</sup>

The Yugoslav element in Sydney drew a lot of its strength from families who moved from Broken Hill during the War. They settled north of Manly, at Warriewood in particular, forming the Yuga-Slav S.C. in 1948. This club was replaced by Yugoslav Orijen S.C. in 1951, which itself folded after 1953. The name Orijen was taken from a Dalmatian mountain. In 1956 the Dalmatinac S.C. was formed by Croatian market-gardeners in Sydney's Liverpool district (Cabramatta). It drew on wider Yugoslav support in 1960 to become known as JASK (Yugoslav Australian Soccer Club) Dalmatinac. Professed by its founders to be a non-political group, the club absorbed a section of the (Serbian) White Eagles S.C. in late 1960 and adopted the title Yugal (Yugoslav Australian League) in December of the same year. At the same time, the club's headquarters was shifted from Liverpool to Manly.'

Throughout Yugal's history its committee and supporters have continued to claim its non-political nature. The club had only ever expressed its desire to help recent arrivals 'assimilate' (their word), to ease them along their way and to promote a *spirit de corps* among all Yugoslavs. The latter could be interpreted generously but, when the original committee

of Dalmatinac left the club after it became Yugal, the committee claimed that the club had become politicised at the same time. Thereafter, the club always sought and received the support of the Yugoslav consulate and diplomatic services, the Yugoslav airline JAT, and the state sympathetic Australian Yugoslav Journal *Nova Doba*. Certainly in Croatian and Serbian eyes Yugal was always a front for pro-Yugoslav activity. Tito's portrait on show during Yugoslavia's National Day ceremonies, attended in Sydney by Yugal club members, seemed only to confirm the matter in the early 1960s.<sup>6</sup>

The first Croatian soccer clubs in Australia began in the early 1950s (Adelaide 1952, Melbourne 1953, Geelong 1954, Brisbane 1955). Sydney Croatia formed in 1957 and began competing in 1958. The club was foremostly a sports club but it also served to network the community and to maintain Croatian culture. Furthermore, the club colours were red, white and blue and the club emblem the red and white chequered crest. Establishing the name of 'Croatia', of gaining recognition both for and as 'Croatia', was a prime concern of the club. The aim was not just to promote national feeling among Croats themselves but to publicise their cause to non-Croats. Croats deliberately used their soccer club to express a political message that was denied them through political channels. It was the same problem faced by Catalonians under Franco who, deprived of their statehood and independence, turned to sport in the shape of the Barcelona F.C.<sup>7</sup>

More than any other ethnic group in Australia the Croats used soccer for political means. It was not just that they expressed their own nationalism. Plenty of other groups did so as well. What differentiated them was how pointed was their expression of nationalism. Convinced of perceived injustice, the Croats gave voice to their antagonism to Tito's Yugoslavia and backed it up with centuries old feuding, particularly with the Serbs and Orthodox church. For good measure, elements of the old Ustashi regularly surfaced, complete with pictures of the butcher himself, Dr Ante Pavelic, that hung in club rooms. Not all Croats were fascists, far from it, and the Ustashi old guard did not control Sydney Croatia. However

the same element, perhaps through fear, was tolerated on match day, resided in the club and dwelt in the community in general.<sup>8</sup>

Serbian soccer in Sydney commenced with the White Eagles club in 1953, the double headed white eagle the ancient symbol of Serbia. The club, based in the Liverpool district, was formed by a young wartime Chetnik veteran but it seems some pro-Yugoslav Serbs were involved as well. It was this element that joined with Dalmatinac in late 1960 when during the same season White Eagles was expelled from the NSW Soccer Federation over registration irregularities. Yugal's success attracted general Serbian support during the club's halcyon days in the early and mid 1960s but, as Yugal declined, a Serbian club for Serbs began in 1967. Taking the name Avala, a symbolically significant mountain overlooking Belgrade, the club was firmly based in the Liverpool district by the early 1970s.<sup>9</sup>

The link between Avala and Serbian nationalism became apparent when the club sub-leased land at Bonnyrigg in Liverpool from the Serbian National Centre. The club has only ever had to pay a pepper-corn rent and has built its club house and stadium on the site. But beside the land and rent, what is even more telling is that the Serbian National Centre has itself always leased all of its grounds from the Movement of Serbian Chetniks in Australia. The land was originally bought in the early 1960s by the Movement which has been known for its anti-fascism, anti-communism and intense Serbian nationalism. The same Chetnik veteran who founded White Eagles has also run Avala since 1976.<sup>10</sup>

At different stages since the early 1960s, Yugal, Croatia and Avala have met each other in competition, generally in the NSW State League. Yugal and Croatia faced each other over twenty seasons, Yugal and Avala six seasons, Croatia and Avala eight seasons. During most of these times some sort of crowd disorder arose. For the decade between June 1968 and May 1978 sixteen stories of crowd misbehaviour at Yugal matches alone were recorded in the press. To be accurate, most of the blame could be attributed to Croatian and Serbian nationalist elements as they were the most 'aggrieved' parties in communist Yugoslavia. And when their clubs

met as opposed to Just playing Yugal, the clashes were especially bitter. Documenting each incident would be tedious but the following selection, involving all three clubs, reveals the dynamics involved in the conflict.<sup>11</sup>

Yugal and Croatia met each other for the first time in 1961. As a consequence of rival fans clashing, both clubs were given official warnings of expulsion at the season's end. At the conclusion of 1961 Croatia gamed promotion from the second division. However demonstrations by club supporters throughout the year delayed confirmation of promotion as the NSW Soccer Federation's screening committee mulled over the club's disciplinary record. The 1963 season brought Yugal and Croatia together for regular competition in the first division. Even before the first confrontation, threats against Yugal players and officials from Croatian extremists escalated into a gang beating. In a 1963 pre-season Ampol Cup-tie that drew a crowd of 8,000, plainclothes detectives complemented a strong police presence in order to prevent an outbreak of violence. The press reported that Commonwealth security officers were keeping certain Croats under surveillance. Further clashes in 1964 led to the NSW Soccer Federation banning Croatia's name for the 1965 season. However the censure deterred no-one. Under the banner Metro Adriatic, Croatian fans continued their 'inevitable' fight with Yugal in the very first clash of the two clubs in 1965.<sup>12</sup>

In 1967 another Yugal versus Croatia match led to the verbal and physical assault of the Australian Labor Party's Senator Tony Mulvihill, honorary president of Yugal. The incident stung Mulvihill into official letters of complaint to the Commonwealth Attorney General. Mulvihill clearly identified sections of Sydney Croatia with Pavelic fascists and heavily criticised the Menzies/Holt government's 'namby-pamby attitude to Ustashi elements'. That the great cold war warrior Menzies and his lieutenants tolerated fascist elements for their anti-communist stance is now common knowledge but Mulvihill knew it in 1967. At that time he was a member of the Joint Committee of Foreign Affairs and was heavily involved in exposing Ustashi elements operating in Australia. He continued on in his capacity as a Joint Committeeman to 1972 when he

became chairman of the Immigration Advisory Council under the Whitlam federal government. His opposition to Croatian activists was sufficiently painful to the latter for threats to be made against him in the Senate Select Committee on Civil Rights of Migrant Australians in 1973. Quite simply, under Whitlam's Labor government Ustashi elements were not only to be identified but they were to be prosecuted as well. Hence, on the eve of a visit by Yugoslavia's Prime Minister in 1973, the federal Attorney General, Lionel Murphy, raided the Melbourne headquarters of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) in an effort to seize documents on members of the Ustashi in Australia.<sup>13</sup>

Typical of the regular clashes, at least in what happened although not always so large in scale, was the first game of the 1970 season which pitted Yugal and Croatia yet again against each other. The scene was familiar. A boisterous crowd, nervous but still chauvinist, flew its flags, particularly Croatian flags after a convincing win in the reserve grade fixture. When just before the main event a sole Croat jumped the perimeter with a large red, white and blue flag and proceeded to parade, a single Yugal fan snatched the flag and bolted to the Yugal dressing room. From such a small incident all hell broke loose. Two hundred Croats stormed out of their terraces on the opposite side of the park, invaded the pitch and tried to break into the Yugal dressing room. Windows were smashed, the broadcasting room virtually demolished, the ticket boxes and their staff threatened. Police mobile units eventually quelled the riot but only after the Croatian national flag was retrieved. The incident was enough to order the game's abandonment and for two years both clubs were banned from using their ethnic names and respective national symbols.<sup>14</sup>

In itself the riot was minor. Damage to property was done but no one was badly injured or even arrested. Yet it was repeated time and time again. Rival supporters sought to goad and provoke each other with flags, chants, insulting songs and verbal abuse. Of course the same could be said for any match with any supporters but the difference was the nationalist fervour that went with it, a fervour spiced by recent war-time experience. It can be argued that only sticks and stones break bones, but the sort of

taunts used by Croats, Serbs and Yugoslavs against each other did, metaphorically, cut and bleed people. The assault at Balkan games in soccer may often not have been physical violence but people could still be intimidated, scared, victimised and terrorised when reminded of atrocities performed a mere generation before. British sociologists have identified the difference between 'real' and 'apparent' violence but the divide is not always easy to discern when witnessed first hand. The 'apparent' can be just as frightening as the 'real'. It should also be remembered that in today's law courts the term assault is not confined to physical violence.<sup>15</sup>

Yet there were still many occasions when fists and feet did fly. In 1977 two Ampol Cup semi-finals were played as a double header on the Sydney Athletic Field. The first involved Yugal and the second involved Croatia and Avala. The first match was temporarily stopped after a linesman was felled by a full beer can and the second match lasted only fifteen minutes. A rain of beer cans, not to be dismissed lightly as weapons, had followed a long period of verbal confrontation in the main stand. The cans led to open fighting and hundreds of spectators spilled onto the pitch where vicious kicking replaced the usual footwork of players. Worse, Croatian fans were menaced by a machete and chains and palings from the ground's picket fence. All were wielded by an element among Avala supporters intent on revenging Ustashi atrocities that even thirty years later haunted the Chetnik psyche. Of course the number of hooligans involved was not even a fifth of the crowd, but they never are, and it does not diminish the nature of the violence. From the testimony of clear minded supporters it also seems that while the young hotheads were the principal assailants they were often egged on by elders whose hearts were just as intent on hurting others. Parents on both sides had taught their children well the loyalties of their own ancestry.<sup>16</sup>

Matters in 1978 were just as serious. Yugal versus Avala on a sunny Sunday afternoon in May promised the usual good soccer - players rarely inspired crowd disorder, but a group of Avala thugs were intent on causing havoc. Two previous matches between the clubs that year had witnessed the usual swearing, insults and nationalist tub thumping but on this occasion

iron bars, bike chains and knives were concealed under clothing. Starting with a deliberate move to get closer to Yugal fans, the Avala thugs began singing provocative nationalist songs, followed this by throwing hot tea and cans of beer and, having achieved a reaction, set upon dissenting Yugal supporters and stewards. The result was split heads and hospitalisation for a number of fans. The game was abandoned and led directly to a referees' ban on all games involving Avala and Yugal that was quickly expanded to include Croatia, even though the Croats had not been involved in any trouble during that season. The ban was eventually lifted but only after promises of extra police were extracted and only after the NSW Soccer Federation finally threatened life expulsion to any club in breach of good crowd conduct."

Conceivably a highwater mark of aggression should have occurred in the last three years. Yugal's star may have waned, just like its Melbourne equivalent Footscray JUST [Yugoslav United Soccer Team], but Croatia and Serbia head-to-head in Yugoslavia was the perfect setting for Croatia, albeit Canberra (who entered the State League in 1988) now instead of Sydney (who had joined the National League in 1984), and Avala to continue their rivalry on the football pitch. However this did not emerge. Government officials have moved in through the agencies of ASIO and Commonwealth and State police. Recognising the political dimensions of the football clubs involved, the federal and state governments have continually monitored the different communities, warning club officials against violent political agitation. The move seems to have worked, a sign of which was Canberra Croatia's decision to forfeit their home game against Avala in August 1991. The club publicly claimed the theatre of violence had nothing to do with it but privately knew better.'<sup>18</sup>

The most recent political messages emitted came during July 1992. The long awaited creation of a separate, independent state of Croatia was amplified to the whole of Australia when the local Croatian community managed to stage a tour by the Croatian national soccer team. It was the first tour of any Croatian representative team in any sport after the United Nations recognised Croatia as a sovereign state. The tour sparked a torrent

of Serbian abuse, including depositions to the Prime Minister that called for the tour's cancellation. The federal government ignored all such pleas but the tour **was** politically inspired, a fact confirmed by an interview with the tourists in *Spremnost*, the leading Croatian newspaper in Australia. Yet as the tour progressed it became obvious that the history of confrontation at the soccer between the different Balkan groups was still fresh in many minds. People stayed away in droves. Some did so because of high prices, others because of the sparse publicity and the absence of big name Croatian players. Arguably, however, it was the fear of violence generated by Serbian anger that kept a great many others away.<sup>19</sup>

By July 1992 ethnic soccer clubs and nationalist politics had a history in Australia that had come to span three full decades. In the case of Croats, Serbs and Yugoslavs, longstanding allegiances and affiliations were frequently played out and acted upon. Indeed, relocation from the Balkans often posed few barriers to the expression of cultural and political loyalties, an expression that was always intense and prone to violence. How violence is defined is an interesting question but it should not be confined to physical aggression alone.

For the main Balkan factions, soccer was a handy but also natural forum for airing one's loves and hates. Local factors did modify behaviour but Yugoslav factors were consistently powerful in perpetuating issues of nationalism. **The** question which arises out of the current Balkan crisis is whether foreign factors will continue to so influence the Australian Balkan population. Yugoslavia is dead Nationalism reigns. Will the surviving Croatian and Serbian soccer clubs bury the hatchet?

## NOTES

- 1 Immigrant from hereon denotes European immigrant.
- 2 The utility of ethnic soccer clubs is explored in Philip Mosely "‘Life and Sweaty’: Ethnic Communities at Play", in D. Headon, D. Home & J. Hootan (eds.), *The Abundant Culture: Meaning & Significance in Everyday Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney 1994.
- 3 James Jupp (ed.), *The Australia People*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde 1988, entries on Croats, Serbs and Yugoslavs.
- 4 *ibid*, pp. 335-337.
- 5 Marin Alsgich (Yugal Soccer Club) papers; *Soccer World* 15 September 1961, p.7; *Novo Doba* 12-18 April, 1988; *Sunday Mirror* 24 February, 1963.
- 6 Marin Alagich (Yugal Soccer Club) papers; *Novo Doba* 12-18 April, 1988; *SS. Yugal 1961-1980*, Sydney 1980; *S.S. Yugal 1961-1985*, Sydney 1985; *Interviews* with [Sydney Croatia] Marijan Pospisil, 16 July 1992 and [Avala] Peter Radan, 16 July 1992
- 7 Mato Tkalcovic, *Croats in Australia*, Victori College Press, Burwood 1989; Roy Hay "The North Geelong Story", unpublished paper, Deakin University 1992.; Marijan Pospisil, *Croatia Sydney 1958-1988 The Club*, Sydney 1988; *Interviews* with Marijan Pospisil 16 July 1992 16 July 1992, [Melbourne Croatia] Frank Burin, Ivan Kokic, Milan Maglica, Steve Mandekic, Jack Sklobar 21-22 July 1992, [Adelaide Croatia] Bernard Filipi 22 July 1992, [Croatian Soccer Association of Australia] Michael Furjanic 28 July 1992; Duncan Shaw, "The Politics of Futbol: Spanish Football Under Franco", *History Today*, No. 35, August 1985, pp.38-42.
- 8 *Interviews* with Frank Burin, Ivan Kokic, Milan Maglica, Steve Mandekic, Jack Sklobar 21-22 July 1992; Dave Davies *The Ustasha in Australia*, Communist Patty of Australia, Sydney 1972
- 9 *Avala Sports Club 1988 Programme*, Sydney 1988: *Interviews* with [Avala] Peter Radan 16 July 1992 Tic Stoikovich 16 September 1992, Jack Cirjanic 17 September 1992; *Soccer World* 2 September 1960, p.3, 9 September 1960, p. 1. It was possible for elements among pro-Yugoslav & nationalist Serbs to club together at Yugal as Serbs dominated much of Tito's Republic. Avala was formed in industrial working class Granville but moved to Cabramatta in the Liverpool district in 1973.
- 10 *Interviews* with Peter Radan 16 July 1992, Tic Stoikovich 16 September 1992, Jack Cirjanic 17 September 1992. Current president and long standing trustee of the Movement is Duro Radan, father of Peter Radan.
- 11 [Sydney] *Sun* 29 May 1978.

- 12 Marin Alagich (Yugal Soccer Club) papers; *Sydney Morning Herald* 15 September 1961, 23 February 1963; *Sunday Mirror* 22 February 1963, 24 February 1963; *Soccer World* 1 March 1963, p.6, 29 January 1965, p.3, 19 February 1965, p.3, Pospisal *op. cit.*, pp. 12-14.
- 13 *Sun Herald* 21 May 1967, Joan Rydon *A Biographical Register of the Commonwealth Parliament 1901-1972*, ANU Press, Canberra 1975; *Daily Telegraph* 7 September 1973; [Australian Railway Union] *Railroad* July 1990, p.8. Mulvihill was a member of Australian Parliamentary delegations to the Council of Europe, Yugoslavia, Turkey and Great Britain. He was also a long standing member of the ALP NSW Branch's Ethnic Affairs Committee. Brian Murphy *Dictionary of Australian History*, Fontana/Collins Sydney 1983, pp.20-21 (entry on ASIO). Mulvihill's appointment as Yugal's honorary president was due to his acquaintance with Marin Alagich, who knew Mulvihill through the latter's opposition Ustashi and Chetnik elements in Australia Alagich says the idea was to get the club involved with Australians but the choice of a pro-Yugoslav supporter was telling - *Interview* with Marin Alagich 21 December 1992. ASIO, used to monitoring the Ustashi, but never anything more during the Menzies era, had been 'slow' to assist Murphy's rooting out of the Ustashi.
- 14 *SMH* 30 March 1970; *Daily Telegraph* 20 March 1970; *Sun* 30 March 1970, 1 April 1970; NSW Federation of Soccer Clubs-Yugal Ryde SC correspondence 1 April 1970, in *Marin Alagich* (Yugal Soccer Club) papers.
- 15 The 'ritualistic' nature of soccer violence was first raised by Peter Marsh et al *The Rules of Disorder*, Routledge & Kegan Paul London 1978. Elements of Marsh's argument have been heavily criticised by succeeding studies on hooliganism. Stephen Wagg *The Football World: A Contemporary Social History*, Harvester Press Brighton 1984, pp.213-215; Eric Dunning et al *The Roots of Football Hooliganism: An Historical and Sociological Study*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1990 reprint, chap 1.
- 16 *SMH* 14 March 1977; *Daily Telegraph* 14 March 1977; Interview with [Sydney Croatia] Vicki Juric 15 January 1992; *Interview* with Tic Stoikovich 16 September 1992.
- 17 Yugal Ryde SC - NSW Federation of Soccer Clubs correspondence 16, 19 May 1978, in Marin Alagich (Yugal Soccer Club) papers; *SMH* 15, 17 May 1978; *Daily Telegraph* 15, 23 May 1978; *The Australian* 16, 23 May 1978; *Sun Herald* 21 May 1978; *Sun* 23 May 1978; *Sunday Mirror* 28 May 1978.
- 18 Interview with Tic Stoikovich 16 September 1992, *Canberra Times* 4, 6 August 1991; *SMH* 10 August 1991.
- 19 Interview with Peter Radan 16 July 1992, Serbian National Federation in Australia-Prime Minister correspondence 5 June 1992, Peter Radan papers; *Interviews* with Marijan Pospisal 16 July 1992, Frank Burin, Ivan Kokic, Milan Maglica, Steve Mandekic, Jack Sklobar 21-22 July 1992; *Spremmost* 14 July 1992. That the tour was sanctioned by the Croatian FA in the first place testifies to the influence of the Australian Croatian community, and the massive financial aid it has sent back to Croatia over the years.

# **BRITISH FOOTBALL, WOGBALL OR THE WORLD GAME? TOWARDS A SOCIAL HISTORY OF VICTORIAN SOCCER**

**Roy Hay**

Football, or soccer as it has been known from the Second World War until 1992, has always been a minority game and an immigrants game in Australia.<sup>1</sup> Its history remains to be written and many questions still have to be answered.<sup>2</sup> Why did football not become the dominant code in this area of British settlement? When so many other British institutions took root in Australia, why did football struggle? What part did football play in the lives of immigrants to Australia and what contribution, if any, did it make to Australian society? What follows is primarily concerned with aspects of the last two of these questions.

The strong hypothesis presented is as follows. If the Australian absorption of a historically unprecedented proportion of migrants relative to its domestic population has been tolerably successful this century, particularly since the Second World War, then this vilified and denigrated minority sport has been one of the most important single influences, for good and ill, in that process.

If Stephen Castles and his colleagues are accurate in their analysis, *Mistaken Identity, Multiculturalism and the Demise of Nationalism in Australia*,<sup>3</sup> that Australia has gone a long way to creating a community without a nation, a nation without nationalism and that this is on balance a good thing, then what helped to make assimilation, integration and multiculturalism - the successive phases of Australian public policy on immigration - work was soccer. At a time when systematic denigration and discrimination was practised, qualifications and experience among migrants were devalued, racism was rampant, the cold war was at its height,

this minority sport enabled some working-class new Australians to survive and retain pride in something they could do better than the natives.

Soccer was, and remains, an extremely conservative social institution. It represents no threat to the establishment in Australia, even if it briefly was to other codes of football, despite the enmity which it has often attracted. Soccer provided both an entry to some Australian social practices and a subtle diffusion of forces making for the ghettoisation of the immigrant community.

Other contributors to this volume are concerned with the role of immigrants in perpetrating violence associated with soccer in the years after the Second World War, but I would assert that despite accusations of violence and alien behaviour, soccer actually reduced social tensions even at the height of the troubles of the 1960s and 1970s. The expulsion of Croatia (Melbourne) and North Geelong Croatia soccer clubs in 1972 from the Victorian State League and the Provisional League respectively was significant in its way for Australian society as the election of a Labor government under Gough Whitlam that year. When groups within the former Yugoslavia are killing each other in barbarous fashion in 1993, it is remarkable that the communities in Australia have so far managed to show an incredible restraint. The influence of soccer on these communities in the interim is one of the reasons why that has come about.

This contribution to Australian society was achieved at a price. The price included the reinforcement of stereotypes, the persistence of male chauvinism, subcultural racism, cheating and the illusion of violence, and little or no change in the class structure among the immigrant communities. In some of these respects the immigrant communities mirrored the wider Australian society.

To understand the basis of these claims it is necessary to go back in time to the origins of the game in Australia and its historical development prior to the Second World War, and also come right up to date to appreciate the impact of changes in the game and society which are occurring today, but the main emphasis is on the critical years between 1945 and 1974, from the end of the Second World War to Australia's first participation in the

World Cup. The three elements of the title, British Football, Wogball or the World Game comprehend the three phases of the development of soccer in Australian society.<sup>4</sup>

When and where association football or soccer began in Australia is still a mystery.<sup>5</sup> In his recent sponsored history of the origins of Australian Rules Football, Geoffrey Blainey argues that the Australian game was invented locally and only gradually distinguished from other forms of football being played in the colonies.<sup>6</sup> He says that early Australian Rules was probably played on a rectangular pitch and that there was strong influence from soccer in the initial stages. The evidence for this is not specifically cited, and it is rather shaky ground on which to assert that football using feet only was being played in Australia in the 1850s and 1860s. Ball games were played on the goldfields, and no doubt many immigrants arrived off ships carrying a ball to play with, but hard evidence on the existence of something recognisable as soccer has not been turned up yet. Phil Mosely in the most recent article on the early history of the game sticks to the traditional story of the first matches being played in New South Wales in 1880.<sup>7</sup> Interstate matches between Victoria and New South Wales commenced in 1883, and while Mosely emphasises the northern connection, there must have been some base in Victoria for the game.<sup>8</sup> Two matches were played in August that year, at the East Melbourne and South Melbourne Cricket Grounds, both ending in draws.<sup>9</sup> The British Association game was not received with overwhelming enthusiasm by the media According to the *Argus*:

The English game bears about the same relation to the Victorian game that bowls does to cricket It is not nearly so rough as the Victorian pastime, nor so exciting to the spectator; but on the other hand the tactics are far less likely to provoke ill-feeling and deliberate ill- usage'.<sup>10</sup>

The *Age* was more blunt

The one recommendation the British Association game, as played yesterday, has over the Victorian game is that it is not so rough. It is mild to the extent of implying physical degeneracy on the part of a community which plays it, and it is altogether unlikely to become popular here.<sup>11</sup>

The *Argus* probed more deeply:

if the game is apparently less rough to an observer, the element of danger is not wanting, and when a number of players come together, all kicking at the ball, some nasty bruises are received. A spiteful player has also a chance of seriously injuring an opponent without his motives being suspected - a thing which could scarcely happen under the Victorian rules. The game was described as boring and only about 200 people turned up.<sup>12</sup>

So the soccer players are not only degenerate but sneaky. They would not involve themselves in the manly violence of Australian Rules but resorted instead to surreptitious and underhand mayhem. These charges being laid against the 'imported men' who played the game in 1883 were to resurface in almost identical terms in the 1950s and 1960s directed against another generation of immigrants.

The current somewhat inconclusive debate about the origins of soccer in Australia fits into a wider one about the origins of soccer generally, with the majority view still being a top-down cultural diffusion model, in which the founding public school educated Britons gradually exported their game to the lesser breeds without the law, within and beyond the United Kingdom.<sup>13</sup> There is a growing minority perception which seizes on new interpretations of the industrial revolution and the advance of capitalism which suggests that these phenomena did not result, as was once thought, in the total destruction of folk football and similar rough games.<sup>14</sup> Hence, there was a continuity in lower or working-class sports and pursuits out of which modern association football grew. The rules and the codification may have come from the scions of the upper classes and from Great Britain, but the explosion of popularity of the game from around

the 1880s, in which Australia shared, owed more to the way it was grafted onto existing patterns of activity and transformed by lower orders, colonials and foreigners who already had their football games embedded in their social lives.<sup>15</sup> As Richard Holt puts it:

How far should we see football not as an invention but rather as a form of cultural continuity, especially as far as the traditions of male youth are concerned? Perhaps we have taken on board too eagerly the heroic accounts of the public school men, who founded the Football Association in 1863, and assumed in consequence that traditional football was suppressed lock, stock and barrel during the first half of the nineteenth century to be re-invented and re-popularised in the second.<sup>16</sup>

The connection with the industrial revolution and its impact on society is an important pointer to the experience of migrants to Australia. Migrants to Australia, particularly those who came from south and east Europe after the Second World War, must have undergone an experience not unlike that of the first generation of people who passed from rural or semi-urban communities into the factory towns of the industrial revolution in Britain, France and Germany.<sup>17</sup> For the newcomers, the disruption of traditional linkages and patterns posed similar problems of re-establishing identity and social reference points in the new society. A good model for this process might be Michael Anderson's study of Preston (Lancashire) which stresses the importance of kinship and other relationships often deriving from the original place of migration.<sup>18</sup> Holt goes on to argue that the industrial city was not an undifferentiated mass, but was a collection of urban villages with their own complicated hierarchies of rank and respectability. Organized team sports were thoroughly 'integrated into this close-knit pattern of collective life'.<sup>19</sup> When the Macedonians hold their picnics in Geelong today, the soccer games are organised between villages, though allegiances are loose and some of those whose village lost in the first round, would then bail out and join another for the later stage of the competition. 'They not only cheat everyone else, they cheat themselves', as a somewhat cynical Maltese observer remarked on one occasion.

Holt argues that football clubs were part of a process of male socialisation and says it would be interesting to know how sport overlapped with other male institutions. To get direct and detailed answers to such questions an oral history project would be required. The information would have to be linked with data from local census and other demographic material in a detailed ethnography. Holt concludes this section of his article, with the claim, 'This kind of urban historical anthropology may be the new frontier of sports history',<sup>20</sup>

Anthropology would point to the early establishment and codification of Australian Rules in Victoria as at the very least a serious obstacle to the growth of soccer as the dominant code. It will not be sufficient to point to any anti-English elements to explain the success of Australian Rules, for the natives quickly adopted cricket, the quintessentially English game.<sup>21</sup> If Blainey is correct in his assessment that Gaelic football had no influence whatsoever on the formation of the Australian game, and was the last thing that an Anglican-Protestant community was likely to adopt in any case, then the association of soccer with Scotland and professionalism may have been an inhibiting factor, too.

Large-scale immigration resumed in the 1880s. The rate of net inflow relative to the domestic population was the highest it had been since the gold rush days. Between the 1880s and the early 1900s, soccer or British football had established itself in all the mainland colonies of Australia.<sup>22</sup> It was very much a migrants game in these years, with strong Scottish influence in many areas. Relationships with other codes varied from cool to cooperative, with some sharing of facilities and a fair amount of mutual slanging. Regular club matches were underway for a variety of trophies, some played on a league basis, others as knock out cup competitions. The rules adopted were those of the Football Association in England and the sport was totally amateur. It found itself competing for popular support with three other codes of football, Australian Rules, Rugby Union and Rugby League. In no area was soccer able to establish itself as the dominant code, and hence it found itself fighting for support, participants and media attention in every colony. Even in coalmining areas

around Newcastle, Ipswich and later in the Latrobe Valley, where the concentration of British migrants was high, soccer was strong but not preeminent.

In Victoria the game rose somewhat in the social scale if not in popular support, with the Governor, Sir H.B. Loch, acting as patron of a series of three interstate matches in 1887 and attending one game in the company of Lord Carrington and the Mayor of Sydney.<sup>23</sup> Two of the three matches were played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the other at East Melbourne. At the dinner after the drawn game between the two state sides, the New South Wales captain, William Baillie, noted that 'If it had not been for bad trade and other circumstances he would have been able to have brought a much stronger team with him to Victoria'.<sup>24</sup> Demonstrations by the unemployed were reported in Melbourne as the soccer matches were being played.<sup>25</sup> This is 1887, in the era of Marvellous Melbourne, long before the crash of the 1890s.

Soccer, like most other sports, suffered from the depression of the 1890s, but revived immigration in the years just prior to the First World War accompanied a revival. In 1909, the doyen of Victorian soccer, Harry Dockerty presented the Cup which bears his name, which is still competed for today, and which is being mooted as the basis for an all- Australian competition in the near future. The Victorian League was reorganised and won by Carlton United in 1909-10. Williamstown, Yarraville and Melbourne Thistle were the other champions before the competition was abandoned during the First World War in 1916. The same clubs with the addition of St Kilda won the Dockerty Cup.<sup>26</sup> By 1913 there was an eight-team league, with six reserve teams.<sup>27</sup> The interstate series continued.<sup>28</sup> Competition continued in 1914 and 1915 despite the outbreak of the First World War but then was abandoned for the duration.

The First World War had interrupted a sharp rise in immigration into Australia. In the aftermath of war thousands of migrants from Britain and a few from other parts of Europe arrived. Between 1921 and 1925, 36, 700 immigrants landed, the largest increase in a five-year period since gold rush

days. Victoria benefited from this influx, and several new industries were created.<sup>29</sup>

Soccer matches in Victoria resumed in 1919 with a new record attendance being established in a second round Dockerty Cup match between Northumberland and Durhams and Melbourne Thistle at Middle Park on 3 July 1920. The First Division of the League now had twelve teams, with matches being played at Middle Park and reserve games at Spotswood.<sup>30</sup> A host of new clubs was formed including Box Hill (1922), Yallourn (1923), Coburg (1918), Heidelberg (1925), Brighton (1924), South Yarra (1928) and Hakoah (1927).<sup>31</sup> Most of these were Anglo clubs, though Hakoah was to maintain a strong Jewish presence off the field until well after the Second World War. Victorian soccer players remained overwhelmingly Anglo, though one or two continental players began to appear, including Schaufelberger of St Kilda, a member of the Swiss Consular Staff in Melbourne, while Melbourne Welsh signed Lorenzo, a new arrival from Italy.<sup>32</sup>

Australian-born junior players were now beginning to come through, opening the possibility of a domestic dimension to this immigrant game. A club for those who considered themselves Australian, Austral, was formed and played for several seasons in the lower leagues. The game was expanding in non-Metropolitan centres. Country Leagues and Cup competitions were being held in Wangaratta and Benalla District, Wonthaggi, Yallourn, Bendigo and Colac by 1926.<sup>33</sup> Mildura brought a representative team to Melbourne in 1927.<sup>34</sup> The Dockerty Cup was now attracting teams from Wonthaggi, Bendigo and Geelong.

A demonstration charity match was played in Geelong on Monday, 26 April 1920, between a team from the crews of the visiting warship *HMAS Platypus* and its accompanying submarines and the Victorian Amateur British Football Association team, Windsor. It was played on Geelong Oval and the *Geelong Advertiser* noted ‘This will probably be the first demonstration of the game ever given in Geelong’<sup>35</sup> The crowd was given as ‘some two thousand people’ and the Navy won four-nil, with the proceeds going to the Geelong Hospital.”

The Geelong United Soccer Club was formed in 1923 and entered Division Two of the Metropolitan competition in 1924.<sup>37</sup> Relationships with Australian Rules remained fraught: a Mr C. Ensby remarked on 'the feeling that appeared to exist among a certain section of the public that the 'Soccer' club was there to oust the Australian game'. The Secretary, A.D. Ive disclaimed any such notion, pointing out that every week people accustomed to see 'Soccer' were coming out from the old country.<sup>38</sup> I must confess that I have treated these and other suggestions that soccer might take over from Australian Rules as faintly ludicrous, representing paranoia on the part of devotees of Australian Rules, and over-optimism by the soccer followers. However, when immersed in a search for instances of violent behaviour in the 1950s, I found quite by accident a reference by J O. Wilshaw, the soccer correspondent of the Melbourne paper the *Sporting Globe* to a meeting in 1933 between himself and the then President of the Victorian Soccer Football Association and John James Liston, President of the Victorian Football Association (an Australian Rules body, to be distinguished from the Victorian Football League, which ran the premier competition), to discuss the amalgamation of the two bodies.

Liston eventually became President of the soccer body as well as the VFA and because the former had no funds approached the English Football Association in 1937 for financial assistance to convert some footy grounds to soccer fields. It seems without success. Liston remained President of the Soccer Association until his death in 1944. While his is remembered in the VFA by the award of the Liston Trophy to the best and fairest player each year, his only soccer recognition appears to have been the J.J. Liston Cup which was competed for by the Under-15s in the 1950s.<sup>39</sup>

The attempted links with soccer in the 1930s came out of shared financial problems at the depths of the depression and also were in part a reaction to another development which does not appear to be well known, the search for a unified code for an Australian football game. Just before the First World War and again in 1933 proposals for the development of a unified set of rules were under discussion. Proponents argued that only the

outbreak of war stymied the move in 1914, but the 1933 venture did not make much headway, though it got a good run in the press. The *Globe* carried a diagram of the composite pitch, and an outline of the rules, which would have allowed for Rugby League within the twenty-fives and Australian Rules play between the 25s and the half-way line. The pitch was to be rectangular.<sup>40</sup>

Meanwhile, soccer continued to make inroads in non-metropolitan centres in Victoria. The *Geelong Advertiser* carried quite extensive reports on Geelong United's matches and on 21 July 1924 at a general meeting of the club a proposal to form a local soccer league was floated.<sup>41</sup> In August, when United had no league game, a match between the club's Scottish and English players was arranged but prior to kick-off a number of scholars from the Geelong Church of England Grammar Preparatory School were given their first lesson in the game.<sup>42</sup> Grammar still plays soccer in 1993.

As noted above, the rise in immigration contributed to or underpinned the growth of new industries in Australia in the 1920s. For example, in Geelong, Ford began operations in 1926, the Valley Mills Worsted Mill was formed as a private company in 1924, and the highly profitable Commonwealth Woollen Mills were sold off to a local consortium in somewhat suspicious circumstances in 1923.<sup>43</sup> Each of these three firms had teams associated with them playing soccer in Geelong by the mid-1929's. Valley Mills and Ford took part in the inaugural league in 1926 and Federal Mills joined in in 1929. It was the recreation clubs, rather than the firms themselves which were responsible, certainly in the case of Fords. The other clubs playing in Geelong reflect the immigrant groups even more directly - Union Jack, Caledonians, Overseas. Each of these was probably the offshoot of an existing Geelong social club.

Two other groups were involved. The navy and the military were represented by the Queenscliff Garrison and HMAS *Brisbane* and *Melbourne*. The appellation of the Geelong and Western Districts League was sustained by the entry of Colac into the Madden Cup, which it won in 1926, and the League from 1927 onwards. Ballarat was the other outsider, making a winning appearance in the Madden Cup in 1928. The Ballarat

connection was to be re-established in 1964 when the Victorian Soccer Federation withdrew all the Geelong teams from metropolitan competition and sent them to take part in the Ballarat and Geelong Districts Soccer Association.

Whatever its later image, soccer was an extremely convivial game between the wars. Hardly a match which involved travelling for one of the teams passed without a meal or a dance or both, interrupted by numerous toasts and self-congratulatory speeches by participants, reported at length in the local press. The predominantly British migrants probably had less of a cultural gap to bridge than many who came later, but there is no doubt that soccer helped them on their way - providing contacts, support networks, boosting business, helping support local industries, e.g., the domestic manufacture of soccer boots and balls.

Just when it seemed that soccer might take off as a major sport it shot itself in the foot by a major split in both New South Wales and Victoria.<sup>44</sup> In the North, the top clubs broke away to form a State League, to concentrate the top players and revenue in the hands of an elite. In Victoria, a proposal to organise the competition on a district or suburban basis led to some clubs breaking away to form their own organisation. To participants in the game, these moves made sense, but to outsiders they meant little but confusion. The only way of distinguishing the rival factions in Victoria was a conjunction, as the Melbourne District Association faced the Melbourne and District Association for the loyalty of supporters, players and referees, who split themselves with half going to one body and half to the other.

The Victorian schism had just been mended in March 1929 when economic depression was to compound the problems the game was making for itself. Attendances remained small, though they tested the limits of the facilities available, and clubs struggled to establish bases in their local communities.<sup>45</sup> In Geelong in 1930 the league was in decline, with only four teams taking part, and it folded in 1931. The Geelong Association did revive by 1934 and entered a Geelong United team in the metropolitan competition.

By 1936, there were eight teams in the Victorian Division One and nine in Division Two, with at least a couple in a Third Division and also two reserve divisions, a junior competition and a schools competition for the Dunkling Cup. The 'international' and interstate matches continued and international touring teams arrived at irregular intervals. Even juniors were travelling interstate to play matches. A South Australian schools team played four matches in Victoria for one win, one loss and two draws, while a Victorian junior team played in Adelaide.<sup>46</sup> In that year too, the Australian senior team went to New Zealand to play a series of three test matches.<sup>47</sup> In contrast to small crowds in New Zealand there was a claimed attendance of 45,000 (of whom 36,690 paid) to see England defeat New South Wales by three goals to one.<sup>48</sup> Soccer continued to be played in war-time, with an attenuated league of eight clubs. Junior leagues at Under-20, Under-17 and Under-15 were also played.<sup>49</sup>

Between the end of the war and 1960 the face of soccer in Australia was completely transformed. In Victoria the composition of the top league switches from being overwhelmingly Anglo to being dominated by European migrants. [See table 1]

The same pattern appears at the local level. Senior soccer was being played in Geelong in 1950. At least four clubs or teams are known to have existed: Geelong United, Geelong Celtic, International Harvester and Industrial Service Engineers Pty Ltd.<sup>50</sup> International Harvester and Geelong Celtic played in the Third Division North of the Metropolitan League, finishing 6th and 5th respectively.<sup>51</sup> Geelong Celtic was based on the Geelong Teachers' College and its team was very Anglo-Australian, judging by the players' names.<sup>52</sup> Celtic only lasted for a season and a bit, since the teachers concerned were all sent their separate ways, and their replacements the next year were largely Australians who were not interested in soccer.<sup>53</sup> International Harvester also had a high proportion of Anglos at this stage, though Frank Hegyesi, one of the first Croatian migrants, played for the team soon after arrival and was known as Frank Harvester for many years.<sup>54</sup> Geelong United was referred to as a newly formed team in July 1950.

Table 1  
Victorian Senior Soccer Clubs<sup>55</sup>

1948		1961		1992	
First Division	Nationality	State League	Nationality	Premier League	Nationality
Box Hill	All clubs	Box Hill	English	North Geelong	Croatian
Brighton	primarily	Polonia	Polish	Bulleen	Italian
Moreland	of British	Moreland	Scottish	Croydon City	English
Park Rangers	extraction	George Cross	Maltese	Fawkner	Italian
Prahran		Wilhelmina	Dutch	Green Gully	Maltese
Sunshine United		Hakoah	Dutch	Sunshine George Cross	Maltese
Western Suburbs		South Melbourne	Greek Hellas	Thomastown	Italian
Yallourn		Slavia	Czech	Albion	Turkish
		JUST	Serbian	St Albans	Croatian
		Melbourne	Hungarian	Oakleigh	Greek
		Juventus	Italian	Brunswick United Juventus	Italian
		Richmond	German	Knox City	English
				Morwell Falcons	Italian
				Altona Gate	Macedonian

Before the war and down to the early 1950s the immigrants involved were primarily Anglo-Celtic (If this term can still be used), as names of players and teams makes clear. In Geelong, the change in the composition of the dominant immigrant groups came with great speed between 1954 and 1956. In these two years, perhaps less, the balance of numbers switched very rapidly from the traditional British groups to newcomers from south and east Europe - Italians, Croatians, Hungarians - and to the Dutch. The indicators are various. Between 1954 and 1955 the Geelong Soccer Club was taken over by the Italian community and even renamed IAMA, the Italian Australian Migrants Association. Billy Dorris, Norman Haigh and others instituted the New World Cup in 1955, which allowed ethnic groups to enter teams in a knock-out competition in the local area for the first time.<sup>56</sup> Holland, Italy, Hungary, Scotland, Croatia, Germany, England, Macedonia, and Ukraine took part.<sup>57</sup> The Western Districts Association was formed with seven clubs in 1955, reflecting the broadening of the local interest beyond the clubs which were competing in the Melbourne-based competition.<sup>58</sup> In 1956 soccer disappears from the sports pages of the *Geelong Advertiser* and reappears in the New Australian column, with reports on IAMA and the Dutch clubs like Olympia and the DSG (Dutch society of Geelong).

The reasons for the change are interesting and quite complex. First there is the increase in the number of immigrants from these parts of Europe in the years following the Second World War. This is connected intimately with the demand for labour by existing employers like Ford and International Harvester and by new firms like the Hume Pipe Company and Shell, whose major refinery project in Corio began in 1953.<sup>59</sup> The communities had to grow to a certain size before organised sport could begin. According to one report, there were only eight Croatian families and six single men in Geelong 1952.<sup>60</sup> A Croatian began to name the families who were here when she arrived in 1954. She says the first Croatians arrived in Geelong in 1949.<sup>61</sup>

Immigrants' needs for a roof over their heads and employment, probably took precedence over soccer for most people, though some new arrivals used the game as an introduction to the local community and the facilities it offered. One Scot claims that on his first day in Geelong he went down to the International Harvester's ground to watch a few players training and was invited to come along for the game on the Saturday. When only ten turned up he was straight into the team. He broke his collarbone in the match and was cared for by the club until he was able to fend for himself.<sup>62</sup> A Dutchman told me that he had a leg swollen to twice its normal size within a week of arriving in Australia as a result of his first soccer match.<sup>63</sup> Another immigrant recounts that when he arrived from Austria he went looking for a German-speaking team, and on being told there was none joined Croatia. By chance the first game was against Corio and he found himself understanding his opponents fluently, while he could not converse with his team mates. He scored the winning goal in that game for Croatia. Needless to say, at the first opportunity he moved to Corio and was still involved with the club in 1992.<sup>64</sup> An inspirational Croatian made a practice of meeting boats arriving in Geelong and Melbourne along with the local Slovenian priest and selecting Croatians who could play soccer to join his team.<sup>65</sup> In all he brought over 350 players to Geelong, whom he billeted with local families and relatives. Many were no good as soccer players, but he brought them nevertheless.

Soccer clubs or teams may have preceded formal community organisations for at least some migrant groups. Ian Wynd suggests that the Ukrainians were the first group to set up a national organisation in the Northern Suburbs in 1956, by which time soccer clubs for Ukrainians, Croatians, Macedonians, Italians, Greeks and Hungarians had already come into existence, and some had already folded.<sup>66</sup> It appears that the same is true of Footscray, though it is difficult to relate the precise starting dates of local clubs and community organisations.<sup>67</sup> In some cases soccer clubs were to provide integrating facilities when political concerns threatened to divide immigrant communities.<sup>68</sup> This was not always the case, and the Dutch in Geelong had two separate soccer organisations - Olympia and the

Butch Society of Geelong - reflecting existing differences, probably religious, which could not be reconciled through soccer.<sup>69</sup>

While a couple of bricks or jackets and virtually any round ball would suffice to get a scratch soccer game under way, organised games required pitches, markings, goalposts, playing equipment, referees and later some rudimentary changing facilities.<sup>70</sup> The open spaces around Separation Street, in Bell Park saw several hundred people from the various communities playing soccer and practising on Sunday.<sup>71</sup> Pitches were vital and here the local authorities, particularly the Shire of Corio, where the bulk of the immigrants settled had an important role. The Shire's immediate post-war concerns were housing and employment, but by 1956 it was in a position to look at the recreational needs of its new citizens. Local businessmen became Shire Councillors and needed little persuasion to provide the basic facilities for soccer.<sup>72</sup>

Hamlyn Park was developed by the Shire and the Geelong Scottish club out of waste ground and scrub as a multi-sport facility with soccer as the first activity. Similarly the Shire provided two pitches at the site of Norlane Waterworld, two at Stead Park and two at Separation Street. These supplemented and later replaced the works' pitches at International Harvester and the Federal Woollen Mills.

At a deeper, psychological level soccer met a need for many migrants. It was a game with which they were familiar from early youth, unlike Australian Rules which caused great amusement to some immigrants. One Croatian (who arrived in Australia under an assumed name, having been fingered, he says, by a Serbian immigration official as a member of the Ustashe when he applied under his own name) recalls nearly being beaten up by a female Collingwood supporter for laughing at what went on when he attended his first VFL game.<sup>73</sup> Preeminently English sports like cricket and tennis were equally outside the perceptions of most new migrants, whereas soccer was in the blood. Migrants were good at soccer. It was a sport and an activity at which they could excel and gain recognition, within their communities and later outside them even if to a limited extent. This was the time when the insular English were having

their soccer prejudices overturned by the famous Hungarian golden team of Puskas, Sandor, Hidekuti, and so on.

Some illumination of the significance of soccer in Australia may be gained from Banfield's study of an area in Southern Italy where poverty and backwardness is seen to result from the inability of villagers to act collectively for the common good. He attributes this to adherence to a philosophy which he characterises as amoral familism. 'In a society of amoral familists, no one will further the interests of the group or community except as it is to his private advantage to do so.'<sup>74</sup>

In a society of amoral familists, organisation will be very difficult to achieve and maintain. The inducements which lead people to contribute to organisations are in an important degree selfish and they are often non-material (the intrinsic interest of the activity as a game). Moreover it is a condition of successful organisation that members have some trust in each other and some loyalty to the organisation. In an organisation with high morale it is taken for granted that they will make small sacrifices, and perhaps even large ones, for the sake of the organisation.

It is fascinating that in his programme for state-induced change to bring about the decline of amoral familism, Banfield advocates education, the decentralisation of public administration, the development of a local press, and says that teachers and other local leaders should assist the villagers to undertake simple ventures in cooperation and community action 'Perhaps the best place to start would be the organisation of village soccer teams.' It would give people experience, without overtaxing their ability to cooperate.

Without wishing to suggest that all immigrants to Australia in the years after 1945 fitted Banfield's notion of amoral familists, there is no doubt that for the young adult male arriving in Australia a cultural transformation had to take place if he was to survive in this new society. Having lived on his wits and the support of refugee organisations to get to Australia, he then had to begin to function in a society with very different sets of norms and goals and organisations. Soccer, about which he knew a great deal, unlike the language and customs of the new country, was often

the means by which that transformation was effected. The road was rocky and collisions occurred, notably in the 1950s and 1960s within the game, when many matches were abandoned or truncated because of violence, usually taking the form of attacks on referees. If you could not get the result you wanted within the rules, then attack the person who was supposed to be applying the rules. Or you might carry the competition into a battle with opposing supporters. The test case for this in extreme form was the experience of the Croatian teams up to and after 1972.<sup>75</sup>

For survival in a new world, in an alien environment, which often had not been chosen - several immigrants sought to go to Canada or the United States of America and only finished in Australia as a last resort<sup>76</sup> - where the language and customs were almost incomprehensible, where discrimination and worse was rife and qualifications and skills were systematically devalued, networks of support were vital. Soccer and soccer clubs provided some of these networks which extended through all areas of social life. Even today contacts within the soccer world provide a whole range of services and mutual support systems. There is no pretense that soccer is the only such focus (church, cultural and folkloric groups, political organisations, other sporting groups, like bocce and handball/volleyball, play a similar role) in immigrant communities in Geelong, or even that it is the most important at all times and in all places, but it is highly significant nevertheless.

Soccer provided an entry into local and national politics for both indigenous minorities and migrants. At the national level, Charles Perkins owed some of his early public profile to his soccer career. At the local level in Geelong, a substantial number of councillors in the Shire of Corio have been closely involved with soccer, including Norman Haigh, a Scottish businessman who, along with Billy Dorris, instituted the inter-ethnic competition which led to the New World Cup in 1956, Michael Parks, Polish co-founder of Bell Park, Gerry Smith, a Liverpoolian who was instrumental in the setting up of the Geelong Association of Soccer Clubs in 1981-2 and held office in Geelong Soccer Club in 1993, Mario Grgic and Vinko Ljubanovic, who are Croatians involved with North Geelong.

But when politics is mentioned in connection with soccer it is usually with the implication that soccer is being used as a vehicle for introducing matters relating to the internal affairs of the migrant's homeland into Australian life, which is better off without such eruptions. There is no doubt that soccer has been used in this way. At time when some other avenues of political expression were closed off soccer clubs have provided symbols of national identity for migrant groups.

Soccer acted as a vehicle for political activities particularly for those communities whose homeland was perceived as threatened. One could almost argue that there is a direct relationship between the importance of soccer to a community in Australia and the depth of the 'national problem' in the former homeland Hence Croatia, Macedonia, Hungary, Ukraine, Greece and Italy were enormously influential in Australian soccer as their European compatriots fought to establish or maintain independence or democratic systems. The Dutch and English, after an initial post-war flourish declined quickly in relative importance. Australian society and political systems often provided little legitimate outlet for migrants' political concerns and hence soccer often formed a substitute system. In the 1970s both forms were under attack when Croatian independence fighters and the Croatian soccer clubs were pilloried.

Remember that Croatia was not recognised as an independent unit. Croatian separatists were active in Australia Lionel Murphy was carrying out his celebrated attack on the ASIO offices. Rumours abounded about Australian military involvement in training Croatian freedom fighters. Fire bombing of the houses of leading figures on both sides occurred Legitimate avenues for the expression of political nationalism in Australia were being inhibited by the prevailing assimilationist ideology of the day.

For Croatians, soccer was one of the few outlets they had to express their sense of national and collective identity. The promotion of a soccer team to the highest levels in Victorian soccer was seen as a key goal by many. Winning and the promotion of the Croatian identity justified virtually anything, even the buying of success. Faced with a tight struggle for promotion in 1959, Croatia (Geelong) recorded what is the highest score

I have ever found in a senior Australian soccer match, 29 goals to 1, against Brunswick. It turns out that the head of the club had bought the match by agreeing to pay the almost bankrupt Brunswick £2 per goal on condition that they turned up. The ploy nearly went wrong when Brunswick took the lead. By half time, with his team about thirteen goals up and the bill rising higher, the President was running around trying to get his players to stop scoring. Then he had the great worry whether the Association would accept the result or smell a rat. The referee, innocent that he was, told Stuart Beaton, Secretary of the Association, that Brunswick had been trying. Croatia won the league, and was presented with the pennant, which was still hanging in Melbourne Croatia's clubroom in 1992.<sup>77</sup> But the Preston club protested against Lions, won the protest, got two points after the end of the season and jumped over Croatia into the State League. Later, a deal was struck between Preston and Croatia to amalgamate and play in Melbourne, with the President hoping to sell the place in the lower division to the Macedonians. A split in the club occurred. More promotions and relegations were to follow, but Croatia was established in the State League when crisis occurred in 1972.

The expulsion of Croatia (Melbourne) and two North Geelong teams, one from the Provisional League and one from the local Geelong competition, was very significant. Croatia was involved in a match with Hakoah, which resulted in a spectator invasion and an attack on the referee. Though the incident did not appear worse than several others which occurred that season, Croatia was expelled from the State League and lost a court case when it tried to regain its position at the end of the season. North Geelong was ousted from the Provisional League after an altercation during a match with Werribee.<sup>78</sup> North Geelong was accepted back into the Geelong competition in 1973, but did not re-enter the Victorian Provisional League until 1979. Since that date both clubs have operated strictly within the rules of the ASF, the VSF and the Western Victoria Soccer Association. This does not mean they have not cheated occasionally, or sailed very close to the wind, but in critical situations they have not pushed their opposition to the governing body to the point where

their participation was threatened. A good test case was the ASF's decision to ban the use of certain 'ethnic' names in 1992, which Melbourne Croatia, like its counterpart in Sydney, accepted.

Whatever the outcome of the expulsion, many people connected with the clubs were convinced that Croatia had been victimized. Martin Groher of North Geelong believes that Croatia was set up particularly by Tony Kovac, who was associated with the Footscray JUST club, and the fact that the match was against Hakoah, 'Nazi sympathisers (Ustashe) versus Jews', was significant. The former Executive Director of the VSF, George Wallace denies it and says that the matter was handled by the book by the VSF, as was proved in the subsequent court case. Both may be right. It seems that there were equivalent incidents that year which did not result in expulsion or comparable penalties, for example Sunshine George Cross versus Footscray JUST on 7 May 1972<sup>79</sup>. The Croatian community had a big meeting to decide whether to fight the case in court and Frank Burin led the charge. Subsequently however Croatia changed tack and came back into soccer through Essendon Lions, which was gradually taken over the Croatian community. Eventually, it evolved into Essendon Croatia and then Melbourne Croatia, now Melbourne CSC, which in 1993 plays in the National League.

There are people who claim to be former members of the Ustashe associated with the Croatian community in Victoria and with the soccer clubs. Young Croatians are currently in Croatia involved in one capacity or another in the tragedy which is taking place. The large sums of money being remitted by Croatians and Serbians and other groups to families, relief and political organisations in their respective homelands. The soccer clubs claim that they would be in a much stronger financial position were not so much of the local community's resources being directed overseas at this time. The 1992 tour by the Croatian national team produced an overwhelming security operation in Melbourne, which along with extortionate prices, deterred virtually all but Croatians from attending the matches. Even so, there were around 12,000 at Olympic Park for the game. That game produced few or no arrests, and only a couple of people ejected

from the ground. A fairly provocative counter-protest in the centre of Melbourne created a little media stir but nothing more. Several senior and junior matches between Serbian and Croatian supported sides have been quietly treated as scoreless draws, or played behind closed doors, but others have gone ahead with minimal disturbance, despite the atrocities overseas. How is such restraint possible? This is the question we should be asking, not why is there violence associated with soccer?

In a pre-television age soccer clubs were the centre of entertainment networks. The Geelong Scottish club began running bucks nights, which were so successful that the women demanded a chance to attend, and so fortnightly dances were run throughout the soccer season as a means of fund-raising and as a community activity. The Croatian and later North Geelong soccer clubs provided neutral grounds where the various factions - nationalist, democratic, religious and labour movement - could meet for recreation. Bell Park Sports Club opened one of the largest function centres in Geelong, built almost entirely by voluntary labour in the 1970s.

Soccer did provide a form of upward social mobility for aspiring community leaders and businessmen in the immigrant communities. As the Executive Director of the VSF pointed out, the people who rose to the top in soccer in the post war period in Victoria were the biggest egotists. They saw soccer as a pleasure, they wanted to put something into the game, but they didn't know how to go about it. They saw soccer as part of their image. They came into the game to do something for the businesses with which they were involved. Businessmen, bank managers, insurance agents, lawyers, commercial people were associated with the game in an honorary capacity, and they tried to use soccer to further their business interests, by raising their status in their communities. They relied on the pull which soccer had over these communities. Some established their status within soccer then branched out into the wider community; others had a community position, which they tried to enhance through soccer. The route followed has to be established in each case.

As the clubs with which these individuals were involved rose to the top ranks in their respective State competitions they posed problems for the

essentially amateur and Anglo administrations which governed the game. Top players from Europe came to Australia and found themselves in an amateur set up riven by class distinctions and prejudice. Soccer had no projected image in Australia at this stage. The Olympic Games in 1956 put the game on the map, with the top players from around the world taking part, including Russians like the legendary Lev Yashin. There were huge crowds for the soccer tournament, and the use of Melbourne Cricket Ground for the competition gave the game a focal point

The Victorian Amateur Soccer Football Association instituted the State League in 1958 as a premier division to head off a breakaway move by some of the leading clubs.<sup>80</sup> By the end of the year the State League clubs were demanding self-government. They were particularly exercised about penalties awarded by the disciplinary committee and wanted the state League Committee to handle all transfers. The clubs also wanted to have a major say in the allocation of games at Olympic Park, and the controversial issue of national teams was also raised. A suggestion was to be put to the State League Management Committee that only one club of each nationality be permitted in the State League, the issue having arisen because there were to be three Italian teams in the State League in 1959, Juventus, Geelong and Footscray. Owen Howard in the *Sporting Globe* noted that this might well cause problems if only one Australian team were allowed in the league. Finally, the clubs wanted district representatives dropped from the Victorian Soccer Council to be replaced by independent members.<sup>81</sup> Most State League soccer clubs finished in the red in 1958 because of player payments. One club was paying £5 per week to 16 first teamers and £3 a week to reserves. There was an open market for players, who could dictate terms. 'Surely this must be another reason why the Victorian Soccer Association must recognise professionalism and not sit smugly under the mantle of so-called amateurism'.<sup>82</sup> The language could be paralleled in England and Scotland in the 1880s.

In an interesting article in the *Oxford Companion to Australian Sports* on Soccer Phil Mosely suggests that:

Ever since the 1890s, the game's indigenous element has always gained control of the game when depression or war has stanchied the flow of migration. However on every occasion that large-scale migration has recommenced, conflict has eventually developed. Administrative splits were regular features in the two most prominent states for soccer, Queensland and New South Wales. Grounds, gate receipts and player payments were the specific grievances cited but the general issue in question centred around the sovereignty of clubs. Migrant groups were opposed to the district system favoured by local-born officials, a system common to all codes of football in Australia but not to British football.<sup>83</sup>

There is a lot of truth in this thesis but it is in need of some modification. The conflict between the successful leading clubs and the associations which represent all the clubs in a country is endemic. It underlay the breakaway by the Football League from the Football Association in England in the 1888 and the similar breakaway from the Football League by the Premier League clubs in 1992, this time with the added element of television. The proposals for European Super Leagues and the modifications of the rules of the European Champions Trophy reflect similar tensions. In Victoria there is no doubt that the attitude of the Anglos, the persistent demeaning of the behaviour and aspirations of the migrant clubs and their representatives, did have a large part to play in exacerbating tensions which existed, but it is inadequate to characterise the breakaway of the VSF clubs as simply a struggle to escape from Anglo control.

The move was led by people like Michael Weinstein representing Hakoah, one of the oldest of migrant clubs and almost part of the Victorian establishment by 1961, while some of the Anglo clubs were also part of the breakaway, including Moreland (a Scottish club) and all the Geelong clubs. Stuart Beaton was sought as Secretary of the Federation, though he was a pillar of the Anglo connection, and after an initial refusal he finished up as an influential figure in the Federation in the next few years. Harry Dockerty became President of the VSF, while all but two of the State Federations in Australia had Anglo Secretaries. So there was not a simple split between

migrants and Anglos, perhaps between different generations of migrants, with those who had been established having to share power with the relative newcomers. It is noticeable that many of the migrant clubs still had a strong Anglo presence in their committees, particularly Secretaries, who often wielded considerable influence - Stan Stacey at George Cross, V.Manson at Melbourne, D Drake at Moreland and F Hutchison at Wilhehnina.<sup>84</sup> However the Anglo Dr. Charles Walker at Polonia was replaced in 1962 by Henry Dressler. The NSW Federation Management Committee and all its sub-committees were very largely Anglos.<sup>85</sup> The ASF and the VSF agreed as early as December 1961 that 'throughout Australian Federation circles there would be no more games played between sides bearing national titles, such as in the World Cup Series played here in Melbourne'.<sup>86</sup>

Then there is the problem of violence on the part of the post-war immigrants. That there were violent incidents in this period is beyond question. The papers carry reports on it, participants remember it, tribunals, sat in judgment on it, and attitudes were formed in relation to it. Academics have written articles about it.<sup>87</sup>

Many questions need to be asked, however, about the events of this period. How much violence was there? Was it greater than in other periods, greater than in other sports at the same period? Was it perpetrated by spectators or players? How serious was it? How was it interpreted by the media, the soccer authorities, the police and the public, the players and the spectators themselves? What caused violence in Australian soccer in this period? Against whom was the violence directed and with what effects? All these questions assume, in an empiricist way, that violence something separable and measurable and a discrete social problem. We ought, as well, to look more deeply at the way notions of violence were created and interpreted, not just in this period and place, but in others. Without wishing to become involved in the fruitless analysis of discourses in a post-structural miasma, we have to ask why violence in soccer took on such cultural significance as it had

Let us begin with the simple empirical questions. How much violence was there? Statistical evidence is totally non-existent. We don't

have any police or soccer authority evidence on numbers of incidents to my knowledge for Victoria, nor, I believe, for any other state in Australia. The records of the Amateur Associations controlling the game have yet to be found, if they exist. From the late 1950s and 1960s the Federations which took over do maintain some sketchy records, but these require very careful handling. Not all cases of violence were reported to the soccer authorities, and many which were have left no apparent trace. The media seized on spectacular examples and treated them with a mixture of prurience and horror. Very often minor incidents, or those in lower leagues, passed unnoticed. Even where one can collect all the reported cases for a season, it is hard to make a consistent series that would satisfy any but the credulous. Yet violence there was.

Geelong participants recount with relish or with distaste the battles which went on, on the field and in the Committee rooms, verbal and physical. A former boxer recalls refereeing a match in which it was obvious that the participants were spoiling for a fight 'Right', he said, picking on two likely fellows who were pawing the turf, 'Have your fight and then we can get on with the soccer'.

There were incidents in other sports, which received somewhat different treatment. For example, violence in football was treated more as local incidents. Incidents at Footscray and Williamstown made newspaper headlines. Also the *Sporting Globe* was worried about viciousness in cricket in the 1950s. Poor umpiring was seen as a problem in all sports, not just soccer. It certainly contributed to incidents which occurred in football and soccer.

Overcrowding was a major problem, as it was in the 1930s.<sup>88</sup> In 1950s and 1960s soccer crowds were larger than ever before, but facilities for soccer were poor, cramped and unsanitary. The VASFA had to refuse entries to ten teams in 1955 because of a shortage of soccer grounds.<sup>89</sup> Crowd control was limited, often taking the form of post-incident intervention rather than pre-game planning.

Clashes of styles and expectations were as important as political or racial or temperamental differences. Some teams and spectators wanted

the 'British' style, with its emphasis on hard running and physical contact, but no shirt pulling, ankle tapping or spitting, and the game allowed to flow by referees who did not blow for minor infringements. Others wanted a skilful, slower game, with little body contact, no brutality, especially directed against goalkeepers, and breaches of the laws of the game immediately penalised.

The tone and context within which soccer violence would be reported was set as early as 1950. J O Wilshaw's columns in the *Sporting Globe* for that year appeared under such headlines as 'New Arrivals in Fisticuff Soccer', 'Foreign Element Causing Trouble', and 'Demonstrations a Blot on Soccer'. The first of these headed an article on a game between George Cross and South Melbourne during which the referee was knocked out.<sup>90</sup> Wilshaw reported that George Cross had been banned the previous year by the referees for interfering with officials, but then went on to say:

The whole question of these new Australians being allowed to form National clubs should be the subject of special investigation and although one does not advocate a boycott of these recent arrivals from the playing fields it certainly would be much better if they were assimilated into the ranks of teams mainly of British stock and thus become better 'mixers' instead of keeping to themselves and in some cases endeavoring to settle political differences on the football field

According to Andrew Dettre and Laurie Schwab, however, many immigrants were refused access to Anglo clubs and so were forced to form their own organisations and then were damned for doing so.<sup>91</sup>

Wilshaw went on to complain about poaching by national teams and cheating by using ring-ins under the names of signed players. Here in essence is the whole of the subsequent criticism of the European element in soccer in the 1950s.<sup>92</sup>

Remember the world context of the time. This is when English crowds are at an all-time high, when it is said there is little violence in the English game, and that it is Scots, Continentals and South Americans who

are the violent people in the game. Fifteen years later, the boot has changed foot and it is the English who are becoming notorious for soccer violence.

The Victorian context needs to be considered, too. Violence associated with Australian Rules was just as rife in the 1950s and 1960s but was reported without all the overtones of xenophobia. Fights at the main VFA game between Port Melbourne and Yarraville were continued outside the ground after police had intervened June 1952.<sup>93</sup> For every soccer incident I find in this period I can trace something associated with football, which is reported in a very different manner. The violence in both may be condemned, but there is no racist or xenophobic content in the latter.<sup>94</sup>

This is deliberately not a statistical paper for reasons already mentioned. In 1952 I have traced eleven violent incidents reported in Victorian soccer. Given that there were over 1060 first team league games played, plus nearly as many reserve matches, plus Cup games, one wonders at the interest generated. In 1953 I could only find four incidents, and in 1954 the number was down to three. Yet in 1952 one match and its aftermath received 102 column inches at a minimum over six weeks, at a time when the normal soccer report ran to around ten column inches.<sup>95</sup>

The focus on soccer violence was very quickly directed at so-called Jugoslavs. Wilshaw again under the headline 'Will Soccer "Incidents" never cease?' reported that 'On successive Saturdays referees have been assaulted and in each case a Yugoslav player has been involved.'<sup>96</sup> Notice that as far as the press is concerned the reference is to Jugoslavs versus the rest, not to troubles between Croatians and Serbians.

My argument here is that the focus on violence associated with soccer, while it did have an evidential base, was shaped by the cultural attitudes of the early 1950s and much of what followed has to be seen as the fitting of subsequent events into a predetermined pattern. It is far too simplistic to account for the violence related to soccer in terms of the politics of war-time and post-war Europe or the characteristics of the migrants, without taking account of the peculiar features of the host society audits interpreters.

Soccer in Australia has been a significant influence in the socialisation of generations of migrants to this country, quite out of proportion to the share of the total population involved or even of the proportion of migrants involved. This has come about in part;

By attracting and moulding appreciable proportions of the young adult males in the early stages of their sojourn in Australia

By giving an avenue for ambitious and egotistical potential leaders among the migrants to fulfill some of their potentials within a circumscribed but to them manageable context

By reinforcing the work of other bridging community organisations which encouraged the migrants to interact with those outside the ethnic group at an important early stage in their stay in Australia

By diverting political tensions derived from overseas experience into channels which proved capable in the end of absorbing the disruptive elements involved

By providing support networks for individuals who experienced temporary or long term inability to function effectively in Australian society.

By absorbing such violence which occurred and channelling energies into forms in which violence was relatively limited in international or domestic comparisons.

By helping to contribute to the creation of what Castles *et al* call a community without a nation, a nation without nationalism

## NOTES

- 1 Terminology can be very confusing to an observer. Association Football for much of the twentieth century refers to Australian Rules Football as played by the Victorian Football Association, not to be confused with the Victorian Football League, now the Australian Football League, which controls the major professional Australian Rules competition. The game now administered by FIFA has been successively known in Australia as Football, British Association Football, Soccer Football and Soccer and in 1993 the Australian Soccer Federation is proposing to revert to football. 'Wogball' came into use to describe the game in the 1950s and 1960s when a high proportion of the players were recent immigrants from South and East Europe.

- 2 Bill Murray and Phil Mosely are currently working on a history of the game in Australia. The best account to date is Mosely's thesis, *A social history of soccer in New South Wales, 1880-1956*, Ph.D., University of Sydney, 1987.
- 3 Stephen Castles, Mary Kalantzis, Bill Cope and Michael Morrissey, *Mistaken Identity, Multi culturalism and the demise of Nationalism in Australia*, Second Edition, Pluto Press, Sydney 1990.
- 4 Following the example of Neil Tranter, much of the evidence for this discussion is drawn from a detailed study of soccer in one area, Victoria, with particular emphasis on Melbourne and Geelong.
- 5 A correspondent in *Australian and British Soccer Weekly*, 29 December 1992, writes 'I am also seeking a copy of a document which states that soccer was played on Captain Cook's vessel "The Endeavour" on the way to Australia. Newcastle and coal were discovered in 1791. Miners from England were brought to Newcastle to mine coal. They played soccer in England before any formation of the game. Hence, that is where Newcastle became known as the "Home of Soccer in Australia".' (sic)
- 6 Geoffrey Blainey, *A Game of Our Own: The Origins of Australian Football*, Information Australia, Melbourne 1990, pp. 30, 33- 5, 37.
- 7 Phil Mosely, 'The Game: Early Soccer Scenery in New South Wales', *SportingTraditions* 8.2, 1992, pp. 135-151.
- 8 *The Age* 17 February 1883, refers to the recently formed Anglo-Australian club in Melbourne and several clubs in Sydney playing the game. The players on both sides for the first interstate match were all 'imported Men' who had been used to playing the game in the old country.
- 9 *Argus* 17 and 20 August 1883.
- 10 *Argus* 20 August 1883.
- 11 *The Age* 17 August 1883.
- 12 *Argus* 17 August 1883
- 13 Bill Murray of Latrobe University is currently writing a history of world soccer and his argument is very much of the top-down variety both in class and geographic terms. The high priest of the cultural diffusion model is John Mangan whose works on muscular christianity and imperialism have been very influential, see for example, J.A. Mangan, *The games ethic and imperialism: aspects of the diffusion of an ideal*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England 1986.

- 14 For a recent social structural analysis which stresses the attempts by the authorities to stamp out rough football, see John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain*. Polity Press, Cambridge 1986, pp. 20-37. Hargreaves concludes that many sports did resist attempted emasculation.
- 15 See for example, Neil Tranter, 'The Chronology of Organised Sport in Nineteenth Century Scotland: A Regional Study I - Patterns', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 7 (No. 2). 1990, pp. 188-203; and 'II - Causes', 7 (No. 3), pp. 365-387.
- 16 Richard Holt, 'Football and the urban way of life in Nineteenth Century Britain', in J A Mangan (ed), *Pleasure, Profit and Proselytism: Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad, 1700-1914*, Cass, London 1988, p. 70.
- 17 The experience was not identical. See the illuminating discussion in Aidan Southall, 'The density of role-relationships as a Universal Index of Urbanization', in Aidan Southall (ed.), *Urban Anthropology Cross-Cultural Studies of Urbanization*, Oxford University Press, New York 1973, pp. 98-103. I owe this reference to Dr Peter Mewen.
- 18 Michael Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1971.
- 19 Holt, *op.cit.*, p. 73.
- 20 *ibid*
- 21 This is Andrew Dettre's argument, 'Those people [early British settlers in Australia, America, Canada and South Africa] included convicts and others similarly disillusioned and determined to forget what they had left behind. Theirs was a rough, tough life-style and when it came to diversion they preferred a form of blood sport. Hence we saw the development of rugby, Australian football, gridiron and ice hockey', quoted by Laurie Schwab, 'Will we embrace Soccer at last', *Sunday Age* 28 February 1993, p. 12.
- 22 The Anglo-Queensland Football Association was formed in 1884 with three clubs, Rangers, Queens Park and St Andrews. It was renamed the Queensland British Football Association in 1889. Max Howell, Reet Howell and David W. Brown, *The Sporting Image: A Pictorial History of Queenslanders at Play*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia 1989, pp. 53-5; Rory Crowe, *100 Years of Queensland Soccer*, Sportslead, 1984, p. 2; *Brisbane Courier* 25 Apr, 1887. I owe this last reference to Ms Donna Rae-Szalinski.
- 23 *Argus* 19 July 1887.
- 24 *Argus*, 18 July 1887.
- 25 *Argus* 19 and 20 July 1887.
- 26 *VSF Official Year Book 1992*, Victorian Soccer Federation, St Kilda 1992. pp. 15-16.

- 27 *Argus*, 7 July 1913.
- 23 *Argus*, 21 July 1913.
- 29 See below p. 54.
- 30 *Argus* 10 July 1920.
- 31 *Victorian Amateur Soccer Football Handbook* 1984, p. 155
- 32 *Sporting Globe* 31 March 1926.
- 33 *Sporting Globe* 17 March 1926, p.7. Mildura had a representative team which played in Melbourne in 1927. *Sporting Globe*, 17 August 1927.
- 34 *Sporting Globe* 3 August 1927.
- 35 *Geelong Advertiser* 20 April 1920. I owe this reference to Peter Begg of the *Geelong Advertiser*.
- 36 *Geelong Advertiser* 27 April 1920.
- 37 *Geelong Advertiser* 26 November 1923
- 38 *ibid*
- 39 *Sporting Globe* 6 June 1953; p. 7, Howard Whittaker, 'To Cliveden Mansion via Nelson Place', *Newsletter of the Williamstown Historical Society*, 1 July 1980. On Liston, see also Marc Fiddian, *The Pioneers*, Victorian Football Association, Melbourne 1977, pp. 143-4, which does not mention his soccer activities; *Sporting Globe* 21 August 1954, p.11, and 28 August 1954, p. 11.
- 40 *Sporting Globe* 31 May 1933, p. 9; 15 July 1933, p. 6; 19 July 1933, front page.
- 41 *Geelong Advertiser* 21 July 1924.
- 42 *Geelong Advertiser* 8 August 1924.
- 43 Geelong Region, *Industrial Register*, *Geelong Regional Planning Authority*, no date; *Geelong Events in History*, p.28; Ian Wynd, *So Fine a Country*, Shire of Corio, North Geelong 1981, pp. 99-101; *Geelong Advertiser*, 18 December 1976; *The Bulletin*, 19 July 1975, pp. 35-66. The Valley Mills, (known as the Mill of Mystery) was established on the 'banks of the Barwon' with a capital of £500,000 and a projected employment of 750-1000, according to a booklet *Corio: Garden Suburb of Geelong*, produced by

Melbourne SubDivisions Co. of Melbourne, nd, but probably 1924-5. Reprinted as part of HU211, Regionalism in Australia Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria 1979.

- 44 The media even began to take notice, the *Sporting Globe* handed the game over to permanent member of staff for the first time in 1928.
- 45 Andrew Dettre claims that this remained true of the 1950s prior to large scale European migration. Laurie Schwab, 'Will we embrace Soccer at last'. *Sunday Age* 28 February 1993, p. 12; see also below p. 73, footnote 91.
- 46 *Argus* August 1936, 17 August 1936.
- 47 *Argus* 20 July 1936. Australia won the last match by four-one The crowd was put at about 1,000. In the previous test Australia had won by ten goals to nil before 8,000 in Wellington. *Argus*, 13 July 1936.
- 48 *Sporting Globe* 7 July 1937.
- 49 *The Age* 5 July 1943; 10 July 1944; 7 May 1945.
- 50 *Geelong Advertiser* 2 September 1950, refers to matches between Geelong United and a combined Geelong Celtic and International Harvester team and a friendly between the latter and Industrial Service Engineers.
- 51 *The Age* 3 July 10 and 13 July 1950; VASFA Handbook 1951, p. 24.
- 52 *Geelong Advertiser* 1 May 1950. The team which but Woodlands 5-0 on Saturday, 29 Apr was: Johnson, Dyer, Cooke, Rawlings, Thornely, Strafford, Smith, Sullivan, Atherton, McGarry, Oxley. The referee that day was a Mr Sandford. Other players to take part that year included Baxter, Crosbie, Day and Glenn. *Geelong Advertiser* 10 July 1950.
- 53 Information from Ron Day, former Deputy Librarian of Deakin University, who played in that team,
- 54 *Geelong Advertiser* 3 July 1950. Among the team which beat Coburg on 1 July 1950 were T McNaught, Morrison, Edbrooke, Burns, Grace, Vaisny and Frew.
- 55 I am grateful to Laurie Schwab for help with the attribution of nationality to some of these clubs.
- 56 Interview with Billy Dorris Senior, January 1992, tape recording in possession of the author.
- 57 There was a Greek team also which did not last long Interview with Joe Radojevic.

- 58 *Sporting Globe* 25 May 1955.
- 59 W R Brownhill, *The History of Geelona and Corio Bay*, with postscript, *Geelong Advertiser* 1990. p. 702.
- 60 Interview with Joe Radojevic, 8 July 1991, tape recording in possession of the author.
- 61 Interview with Martin and Regina Groher, 13 August 1992, tape recording in the possession of the author.
- 62 Interview with Billy Dorris, Senior, January 1992, tape recording in possession of the author.
- 63 Information from Pieter Langedyck at Hume Reserve, Saturday 27 June 1992
- 64 Reconfirmed by Fred Noggler at Hume Reserve, 22 August 1992
- 65 Interview with Joe Radojevic, 8 July 1991, tape recording in possession of the author,
- 66 W R Brownhill, *op.cit.*, p. 702
- 67 John Lack, *History of Footscray*, Hargreen Publishing Company, North Melbourne 1991, pp. 370-373.
- 68 There is a pioneering discussion of the institutions of - of the immigrant communities in Melbourne in Rachel Unikoski, *Communal Endeavours: Migrant Organisations in Melbourne*, Australian National University Press, Canberra 1978. This gives weight to the importance of soccer clubs to these communities.
- 69 At least according to Joe Radojevic and Billy Dorris.
- 70 Initially, players changed in cars or in the open, according to both Billy Dorris and Joe Radojevic. Chris van Beek got a female friend to write to the *Geelong Advertiser* complaining about naked men changing within sight of young hockey players at Stead Park. Van Beek had been trying for some time to persuade the Shire to build changing rooms for Geelong Soccer Club. Within a few weeks of the letter appearing in the press, a new tin shed with showers was completed.
- 71 *Geelong Advertiser* 11 July 1955, in the Northern Suburbs column.
- 72 Norman Haigh, who was deeply involved with Geelong soccer was a Shire Councillor in Corio from 1953 to 1960, Ian Wynd, *So Fine a Country*, Shire of Corio 1981, p. 273.
- 73 This man was also the father of one of the best full forwards to play in Geelong, for Geelong West in the VFA, and he later became a devotee of the game.

- 74 EC Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*, Free Press, New York 1958, p.164.
- 75 See above pp 64-67.
- 76 Youngsters in Europe saw Australia as a land of snakes, venomous spikers and kangaroos America as the land of fast cars and consumer goods, Martin Groher, interview 13 August 1992, tape recording in the possession of the author.
- 77 There is a photograph of the Croatia Geelong team in North Geelong clubrooms at Elcho Park.
- 78 Information from Joe Radojevic, Martin Groher, Billy Dorris and Russell Butler. The North Geelong team playing in the local league in Geelong was also suspended in 1972
- 79 *The Age* 8 May 1972.
- 80 *VASFA Handbook* 1958.
- 81 *Sporting Globe* 24 September 1958.
- 82 *Sporting Globe* 10 September 1958.
- 83 Phil Mosely, 'Soccer in Australia', in Wray Vamplew et al. (eds) *Oxford Companion to Australian Sport*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne 1992, pp. 316-23, see also Victorian Amateur Soccer Handbook VASFA 1984, p. 157, 'In Victoria many of the new ethnic clubs formed their own organisation, to be known as the Victorian Soccer Federation, VSF for a time existed side by side with VASFA'.
- 84 *VSF Handbook*, 1062, p.8. It is necessary to be very careful when using names since many immigrants anglicised their names.
- 85 *Soccer Year Book 1962*, published by Soccer World 1962 p. 9.
- 86 *The Age* 11 December 1961. 'A national register of players in the Federation will be compiled to prevent illegal transfers and the poaching of talent between the States.'
- 87 Rob Lynch, 'Disorder at the sidelines of Australian Sport', *Sporting Traditions*, 8.1 November 1991, pp. 50-75; Wray Vamplew, *Sport Violence In Australia: Its Extent and Control* Australian Sports Commission, Canberra 1991; John O'Hara (ed.), *Crowd Violence at Australian Sport* Australian Society for Sports History, Studies in Sports History Number 7, ASSH, Campelltown, 1992.
- 88 J.O.Wilshaw, 'Soccer crowds need greater control', *Sporting Globe*, 21 June 1933, p. 10.
- 89 *Sporting Globe* 30 March 1955.

- 90 *Sporting Globe* 12 April 1950, p. 13.
- 91 Laurie Schwab, in conversation at Olympic Park on 23 February 1993 and Laurie Schwab, 'Will we embrace Soccer at last?', *Sunday Age* 28 February 1993, pp. 12-13.
- 92 Wilshaw returned to the theme under the heading 'New Australians attack referee' in July 1952. 'Just when the New Australians had given some evidence of having fallen into line with the ethics of sportsmanship that has prevailed in Victorian soccer for a generation before they came, there was another outburst by spectators at the close of the Brighton v Juventus game at Olympic Park last Saturday'. This incident involved spectators after the game, not players. *Sporting Globe* 30 July 1952, p. 14.
- 93 *Sporting Globe* 7 June 1952, p. 5.
- 94 For a general introduction to the issue, see Roy Hay, 'Violence by Players', in Wray Vamplew et al. (eds.), *Oxford Companion to Australian Sport*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne 1992, pp. 367-8.
- 95 *Sporting Globe* 12 April to 21 May 1953. The game was between Juventus and JUST and involved a penalty incident, followed by the refusal of a player to leave the field when ordered off, and a subsequent brawl
- 96 *Sporting Globe* 27 August 1952, p. 15; 'Jugoslavs again in Soccer Limelight'; *ibid*, 24 September 1952, p. 15, reporting that JUST refused to play at Olympic Park against Polonia unless it got one-third of the gate.

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